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FOOT NOTES

OR

WALKING AS A FINE ART.

BY

ALFRED BARRON.

"Q."

What is Art? Here is my answer;
Leg of tramp, and toe of dancer.

WALLINGFORD, CONN.:
WALLINGFORD PRINTING COMPANY.
1875.

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TO MAUD,

A PINKISH-BROWN DAY-OLD BABY,
LYING ON A PILLOW
LIKE SOME QUEER SHELL CAST ON THE SAND
BY A MIGHTY OCEAN-BILLOW.

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Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages,
And palmers for to seken strange strondes.
—Chaucer.

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PREFACE.

THIS book was written some ten years ago in the old Connecticut town of Wallingford, and published in a series under the head of "Foot Notes." The lively interest it excited was as much a surprise to me as it could possibly have been to any one in my circumstances. Since then an English naturalist has written a work on botany with the same title; but seeing no reason in that why I should give up a good name, I have accepted the favor the "Notes" met with, and have ventured to put them forth in their present form.

This book will at once suggest the name of Thoreau. In the year 1862 I read his "Succession of Forest Trees;" that article overcame a certain prejudice I had against him, and led to the reading of his "Excursions" as they appeared in the "Atlantic Monthly" and finally to the reading of "Walden." I had long been a walker, and had even thought of making a book full of homely things. In 1864 I sat down to write an account of a visit to the Regicides' Cave, when I was suddenly struck by a strong wave of influence which made the product of my pen quite different from anything I had ever written before. That was the beginning of "Foot Notes." I was

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not at that time a Spiritualist, and am not much of one now: but I must tell the truth, queer as it is, and leave it to take care of itself. Some time after that I began to feel the presence of an invisible companion in some of my walks. At first I thought it was the Evil One; then I came to think it might be Thoreau. It never spoke to me, nor injected any thoughts into my mind to my knowledge; it only seemed to want to be near me. I should not have been at all surprised if Thoreau had appeared to me. Then on the other hand, I should not have been surprised if I had seen a fairy among the toad-stools. Whether I was followed by an evil spirit, or by Thoreau's familiar, or by Thoreau himself, or whether I was only suffering from a disordered fancy, is a question which some one must decide for me. I had no purpose of imitating anybody. It was an easy necessity to write as I did.

The egotism of the book must find its excuse where the book came from. The writer was all *eye* when he wrote it, and the printer had to get new *I's* before he could print it. For my own part, I have always enjoyed certain egotistical writers; and I still believe that it is as proper for a man to show himself in a book as it is to show himself in the street. But he must do it at his own risk; for neither the one nor the other is safe unless he is a civil person and sure of his company.

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FOOT NOTES.

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FOOT NOTES.

I.

I AM, dear reader, a tramp. There is hardly a vestige of the chevalier left about me, and I experience a sort of pity for those people who can't go anywhere without a horse. When I travel I like to leave my beast behind. It exasperates me to think of folks putting on airs and calling themselves the chivalry, and all for no other reason than because their fathers rode horses in England. For my own part I want nothing better than to find that my ancestors met this world face to face, and foot to foot, and trod it well under heel as good infantrymen. Nevertheless, I am willing to ride if the thing in hand is unimportant, or if, perchance, my companion is a centaur; but when my affair is weighty let me go to it on foot.

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I walk chiefly to visit natural objects, but I sometimes go on foot to visit myself. It often happens when I am on an outward-bound excursion, that I also discover a good deal of my own thought. He is a poor reporter, indeed, who does not note his thought as well as his sight. And let me give notice here, that when I go a tramping, as I did the other day to the Regicides' Cave, I shall report a part of my thought if I report at all. You will get more from me if I keep

ON WALKING.

In order to walk profitably I find that experience and reflection are necessary. If you are led by a companion too vigorous for you, or if you go too far, your walk makes pretty heavy drafts on your strength and degenerates into a brutish affair. Too rapid a gait, though it may be very exciting at first, either dissipates the attention or centers it on the mere act of walking. On the other hand, a pace too slow begets a sluggishness of mind and at once makes an end of all your fine susceptibilities. You had better be riding a

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horse, or even turning a grind-stone, than be lumbering about the country without having your soul along with you. A trial will soon teach you how much you can profitably do.

The profit of a walk depends on your waiting for the golden opportunity — on your getting an inspired hint — before setting out. If you can command only a half-day's leisure, then twelve miles — six out and six back — are enough to bring you to some desirable place for observation. If you have a whole day to walk in you can easily make twenty-five miles, and still have your home as a base of operations. In case you only wish to view scenery, this distance can be exceeded; but I do not think it pays. If you confine yourself to walks of twelve miles in every direction from your home, you have a field of observation comprising four hundred and fifty-two square miles.

It would be strange if such a territory did not have enough beauties of scenery, and wonders of geology, botany, history and zoology to content anyone but a superficial man. I say, therefore, let us do our duty where we

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are, think where we are, observe where we are, and let us be happy where we are, and not tormented by the lust for foreign roaming. Stand in your appointed circle, is the word; and when God wants you in another, you will get a hint in season.

Not to brag, but to help you see your own advantages, I will mention some of those in my circle of four hundred and fifty-two square miles. I take Mount Tom for a center, and sweeping the country with a twelve-mile radius, I touch the valleys of the Naugatuck, the Quinnipiac, and Connecticut; the Hanging Hills, the highest land in the State; and the Mounts Higby, Lamentation, Carmel, West Rock, (this last is flavorous with history,) and East Rock and Tetoket, all modest enough; Pistepaug pond and Saltonstal lake, two blue eyes that are always looking skyward; fresh-water swamps, black and tussucky, and salt marshes wholesomely fragrant, and New Haven bay that just hints at the largeness of the sea. So far as the outward can inspire you, you must certainly have enough right where you are for all intellectual fullness. Your

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true kingdom is just around you, and your leg is your scepter.

THE LEGS.

A muscular, manly leg, one untarnished by sloth or sensuality, is a wonderful thing, and it is to be hoped that, as a pedestrian, I shall be excused if I should notice it somewhat warmly; for, to extenuate further, my own slender *leg*-acy gives me a right to appreciate another's richer inheritance. If people were less vain and loved beauty more, they would complain of fashions that hide all the comeliness there is in a good leg. There are men whose legs equal those of the Apollo Belvidere; and yet were it not for the chance revelations of the out-door bath, we should have no better idea of their beauty than could be got by contemplating an old pair of pantaloons.

Let us look at the leg as a machine—a little askance if you please. The first thing to be noted is, that it everywhere deviates in contour from the straight line. This deflection

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from right lines is the compromise of nature in her attempt to unite support and motion in the same member. To confirm this we have only to notice the very marked outward curve of the thigh, caused by the bending of the *femur* or thigh bone, and by the overlying muscles. This curve of the bone gives room on the inside of the thigh for those large muscles which move the parts below the knee. It is further noticeable that the shin falls behind a perpendicular line from the thigh to the foot. This arrangement, (perhaps more apparent than real, owing to that heap of muscles in the calf that moves the foot,) enables the muscles of the thigh to bend the leg, otherwise they would exercise their contractile power on a dead center.

The beauty of a leg nevertheless depends largely on its straightness; for if it is too much deflected, it loses its beauty of stability and sprightly movement. On the other hand, if it does not have the crookedness that comes from a large calf and a thigh well swelled out by muscles, it loses its beauty of power, however active and facile it may be.

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In short, a good serviceable leg is one that hath a crooked straightness.

To continue our study a little further, let us notice how the leg tapers from the hip to the foot. The thigh, that great bundle of thick muscles, is the seat and expression of power. This part is the one of chief interest to the pedestrian, provided his feet are tough, for its large muscles are chiefly concerned in walking. I must not fail to call attention to that wonderful muscle *sartorius*, or the tailor's muscle, for it is that which enables the walker to fold his legs beneath him and take a seat on the plain without even a clod to sit on. From the knee downward to the foot, flexibility, dexterity and velocity take the place of power; still the great muscles of the calf keep up a strong hint at that. And coming down from the thick and powerful thigh we reach the foot at last, arched and springy, versatile and conspicuous.

These members when in motion, are so stimulating to thought and mind, they almost deserve to be called the reflective organs. As in the night an iron-shod horse stumbling along

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a stony road kicks out sparks, so let a man take to his legs and soon his brain will begin to grow luminous and sparkle.

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II.

I AM compelled to admit that pedestrianism is at present altogether too mannish. Our civilization in some respects is such a poor little mouse, that a free and simple companionship of men and women in excursions so dear to a walker, is a thing not to be thought of. In addition to this, women have not yet won a sensible working- and walking-dress. Nevertheless it is good for a man to keep himself in such condition that he can do ten miles on short notice. The deficiency in this respect, to which most people confess, is not a pleasant thing to contemplate, and it brings me to some

CONSIDERATIONS ON POWER.

I do not propose to speak of the power to govern; neither of intellectual, nor physical, nor moral power. Life is what I have in

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mind; that something which includes all these other powers, and gives weight of character to a man; that which makes him strong, irrespective of his talent. It is that which gives momentum to the intellect; it is that which gives strong wings to genius; it is that which gives authority to morals. One man's life is a great strong blaze; another man's life is only a flickering candle.

But if this great force is not transmuted into intellect and moral sense, it simply makes a tremendous animal. Without this intense vitality there can be no great achievement. If a race possess this, you may be sure that a grand destiny awaits it. Cæsar relates in his Commentaries that once when he was about to engage in battle with the Germans, a great panic was excited among his Roman legionaries by the reports of those merchants who had visited Germany. Those traders declared that the Germans had such fierceness of eye that it was impossible to look at them. There is nothing to contradict this estimate of the old Germans, extravagant as it may seem. From that fierce and intense

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stock has sprung the dominant Anglo-Saxon race, as well as the Reformation, and a wonderful growth of art and literature.

David, and Paul, and Luther, were undoubtedly men strong to the very base of their natures. We are told that "not many mighty are chosen;" but, nevertheless, it seems evident that God never delegates his great works to a weak man. There are indications which point to the conclusion that inspiration first comes to a man through the strong passional side of his nature.

Whoever has reflected upon educational themes, can scarcely have failed to confront the question I have indicated. It seems to me that we treat education superficially, until we thoroughly consider the importance of this great mass of passion and will that lies behind the intellect, like the big weight of iron behind the edge of an ax. A larger mold of men is what we want. And to get this we must stop treating men like a miscellaneous lot of hatchets and axes that are only waiting to be ground. We are enfeebled. We don't want new outlets for power when

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power itself is what we lack. It is painful for me to know that a man thinks that the grinding he gets at college, is going to settle the great question for him, when I know that greater weight of metal is what he needs. I am sick of a culture that don't look toward giving us strength of life. Instead of sending our average children to school, thinking to make uncommon men of them, let us first set them to seeking every source of intense personality. Let them make blood; let them cultivate, but not waste, its secret energies; let them live a life of trust and invite inspiration, for these are the channels for an influx of power. Life has not yet become so much a sinecure that we can afford to spare one atom of our momentum. I will say here distinctly what I have intimated above, that I do not wish to discourage culture; I only want to have it backed by intense elemental energies. It is stimulating to think that there may yet be a university with a culture truly invigorating. If I have succeeded in turning attention to power, I shall think you one degree nearer to its realization; for the very

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appreciation of power exposes us to its influx. The central energy of the universe stands ready to fill us if we watch for its channels.

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III.

ON one of the roads leading to West Rock there were three trees—two white oaks and a walnut, that had achieved royalty. One of the charms of this old region is that a tree here and there has had an opportunity of reaching the highest ideal of its kind. One soon comes to get a sort of property feeling in the noble things with which he is surrounded. But loving your neighbor's trees while he has the power to cut them down and put them to base uses, is as perilous as giving your heart to a woman who may prove to be the property of another.

I noticed some time ago that one of those oaks had been cut down; it was but a sorry consolation to think that its great strong arms might be going to strengthen the sides of some high-masted ship. When I last saw it

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its trunk lay headless and armless like the body of a giant; a large section empurpled by a sort of ink showed itself; and two men in blue overalls and armed with a saw were wagging their heads over it. When a grand thing is destroyed, I say somebody ought to be punished unless he can make a good defense of himself. What do I care for the rights of property then? So I go to the side of the road; and there is a dialogue carried on over a chestnut rail splashed with lichens.

"You are getting some pretty nice ship-timber out of that old oak?

"We are getting a lot of very hard work out of it." I never saw one of these wary, unimaginative Yankees surprised into anything.

"Oh! I reckoned you were cutting it down for ship-timber."

"We could have got some, but it would have taken a good deal of work."

"So you cut it down just to make wood?"

"Can't use only the limbs for that;" and then they smiled at the idea of making firewood of that great knotted bulk.

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"I suppose you know that tree was one of the largest oaks anywhere about here."

"Yes, it was a pretty big one."

"Well, if I had wanted to buy your farm, I would have given you fifty dollars more for it if that tree had remained standing."—They didn't smile at that remark, and I hope they are now suffering all the pangs of vain regret.

It is a wonder that such folk don't burn their fences for fire-wood and get sent to a lunatic asylum. I venture to assert that if the owner of that oak had let it be and had attended well to its discourse, he would have got more good from it than from many a sermon. I can only give the text on which an oak enlarges. It is, "Be strong; be patient in slow gains, and grow only for noble uses."

An oak is the very embodiment of sturdy endurance. Strength is its essence; it holds its limbs at an angle that gives no hint of compromise with the storm or the law of gravity; its wood goes to fill strong offices; it is the last tree to fade and drop its leaves;

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its fruit even has a flavor that is tonic, and a hint at virile energy, and a firm hold on the imagination. And how mendacious we are in our appreciation of this tree when we finish our houses with pine and then hire some painter to stain it in imitation of oak. It is my purpose, you see, to defend all those trees which by their splendid growth and being prove themselves more potent for good than any reformer.

The fate of that great oak had made me solicitous for the big walnut. Its thick trunk and mighty limbs and crotches — suggestive of untold uses in a furniture-shop — might prove too strong for its owner's pride and love. I therefore search out the sturdy man and salute him. He evidently has no poetic veneration for his giant, but is keeping it from some pleasure in its size; for he names what he thinks is a great price for it. I try to strengthen its weak defenses in his mind by telling him that it is the largest walnut that I have ever seen in the State; yet I do not feel at ease about it.

The destruction of that fine oak has made

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me somewhat wiser in respect to things that surpass their fellows. Having been for a long time an admirer of trees, one of my pet ideas has been to find a country that would cherish its native trees until they could put on all their dignity and grandeur and thick-clustering associations of home and love. Thus on the borders of every region toward which we turn our attention we station our ideals like advanced picket-guards, and we progress because we have such ideals. Our hearts would die out of us could we not realize in our times of defeat that there is an unmixed beauty and goodness somewhere in the world. But still I think we are a good deal pestered by our ideals. If we try to advance, it is quite likely that some one of these grisly fine things will thwart our endeavor; if there is any lion in the way, it is our paragon of beauty. I observe that handsome people, and all natural objects perfect after their kind, are very much sought after, and I observe, too, that they do not always make us contented with common things. I am going to be content with homely beauty — such beauty as

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comes to me a little mixed. I think I shall find enough of it if I suck things diligently. The red-shirted wood-chopper standing on a log, and having for accessories only the gray stems of trees and the blue-curling smoke of his camp-fire, shall, if I choose, be as fine to me as any gay cavalier cantering down the street. And besides, I have had my successes of this kind. I have seen trees, and people, too, I had nearly said, so homely that they were fascinating. Some such beauty as one gets from the odd gargoyles of an old Gothic building, I get from these ugly

RED CEDARS.

The road to the Regicides' Cave is, in several places, flanked on either hand by rows of cedar that form avenues half a mile or more in length. These cedar-fringed roads are so common a feature hereabout, and the tree itself is so rusty, thin and straggling, so ugly, so grotesque withal and in such strong contrast with the grace and dignity of other trees, that I am compelled to compare it with

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its kind in other places. The red cedar is very freakish and susceptible to the differences of soil and climate. Here in Connecticut it is as I have described it. On the Hudson it is exceedingly upright, dense and spindling, and is almost the first tree that the traveler notices in that region. In some of the Western States, in Indiana for example, where it is very common in the village yards, it is remarkable for its close habit and fine bronze color. In North Carolina it assumes a broad and flattened head, and is consequently a low tree. At Washington on the Pamlico in that State, there used to be an arbor of live cedars covering a walk of considerable length from the gate to the piazza of a mansion—a use to which this tree is by its habit there well adapted. I cannot go any further on this theme without borrowing or

STEALING.

A writer soon finds himself in a strait. If he read much and have a poor verbal memory, the bare seed of a thought may drop

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down into his life while the husk is forgotten; by and by that idea comes bubbling up to the surface of his mind; he snatches the prismatic thing as his own, and if he do not bethink himself quickly, he is indicted as a plagiarist. If he read little, but is given to his own explorations, he is pretty sure to make the same discoveries that others have made before him. Then follow criminations and recriminations which are pleasant to no one. For my part I think there is a great deal too much pettiness about such matters. I sometimes get a sad pleasure from seeing one of my own neglected thoughts beautifully elaborated by some genius who gets pay for his work. I shall not plunder wittingly, but I shall open myself to inspiration with such power and trust as are in me, and I shall go on without fear of the charge of plagiarism. A modern writer well says, "A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In eve-

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ry work of genius we recognize our rejected thoughts: they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty."

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IV.

I ALWAYS have a particular experience when I reach a certain point on the road to New Haven. I have traveled on that road in one way or another, by night and by day, more than on any other hereabouts, until I consider myself somewhat familiar with its details and its capacity for yielding pleasurable emotions; but on reaching that place to-day, my usual experience was repeated with such intensity and variation as to remove it from the sphere of undefined sensation to that of conscious thought. I can not tell when this experience began, but on looking back I have concluded that it has always been a part of my sensations on that road. Presuming that my experience — the character of which I will shortly explain — is very common to every one who has a habit of noting his impressions, I will speak of the place with some degree of minuteness.

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When about two and a half miles from New Haven I always get my first glimpse of the city; at this point the cliffs of East Rock and the steeples and towers rising above the trees, are seen against the sky, and they make a picture which arrests me. The road here descends, and passing under some elms and red cedars, and looking down upon an artificial pond, reaches the bottom of a little hollow with small outlook. The road up the opposite declivity is flanked on the left with barberry bushes still holding their red fruit, and by a file of Lombardy poplars that have an air of decayed gentility. These sickly exotics remind me of the gently-nurtured men who, like Hugh Clitheroe and Clifford Pynchon in the tales, shiver and decay when circumstances grow stern. Further on, the road is seen to become a quaint cedar-avenue. In the bottom of the hollow is a small stream fed by the pond on the left; it plods along through a meadow, drops into a roadside trough, drops out again, glints gently as it passes over the gravel, darts under the road, glistens out again, and finally disappears down

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a glen which is wooded on the one side with large oaks and elms, and on the other by a thicket of evergreen lined with laurel. Looking down this dell you have a glimpse of water; and once last winter I saw the skaters and a fire down there; there was a black, irregular star of sticks on the ice, above that a cone of flame, and higher above a cloud of smoke like a balloon.

It is in this hollow where I always feel the presence of New Haven. This sense of another presence is as distinct and unequivocal as that which I experience when I first meet a man. I am conscious of something that can criticise and be criticised; something that can impress my sentiment with its own sentiments and color my thought with its own thoughts. The actual city is yet a long way from this hollow, but for all that, I always find the city gate out here on the Hartford turnpike, and I have to pay toll. I have had this experience so often in this place, that I infer that two and a half miles is the greatest distance at which New Haven can sensibly impress my sphere. I imagine it would not

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be easy to resist the city fashions and lead a simple, rural life, much within that distance.

It is needless for me to describe the particular nature of my impressions; it would perhaps be too egotistical. I will say, however, that different cities affect me quite differently. Some of our Western towns which are mostly devoted to business, almost torture me by their influence. To be sure I know that the people of New Haven are much given to looking between the two shells of an oyster; that many vessels come to Long Wharf laden with sugar and molasses and rum from the West Indies; that the city is filled with great shops whose fabrics are multifarious and widely marketed; that it has whole streets filled with trading men who, compared with Western merchants, wait on their customers with a subdued alacrity; and, in short, I know that New Haven is a place of great industry and enterprise; nevertheless, the impression it gives me is one rather intellectual and suffused by taste and religious feeling. Perhaps Yale College, with its hundreds of students in the heart of the city,

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and with its numerous teachers holding the high places, sends out the strongest emanation.

I do not know as I am any more receptive than other people, but I sometimes think I am. Once in a while I find that I have been thinking another's thought and feeling another's feeling. The depths then appear to yawn around me; and I am amazed, and I wonder how much of this that I call my experience is really mine. My word, I notice, has a flavor at times which indicates that the taste of some book I had eaten had not gotten out of my mouth when I spoke. May be I am like butter, which is so easily tainted by positive odors like those of leeks, or tobacco, or smoked herrings. Yet I think I am not without a certain fierce individuality. I am quite implacable when I think of one person selfishly violating the sacred personality of another who is weaker in magnetism. I have always lived a little one side just because I did not care to have even the good enter my sphere with their influence. Still, when I look into things closely I am compelled to admit that it is the rule of nature

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that the strong shall penetrate and move the weak.

I see the germ of a tremendous faculty in these half receptivities. The man who has cultivated his knack at impressions, might be a terror to all sinners and darklings. Still there may be some incompatibility between the greatest receptivity and that perfect self-possession necessary to the pursuit of science in this direction. This sense is a window that one hesitates to open, not knowing what may fly in; a gate one fears to enter, not seeing what spirits inhabit there. I have concluded that some power or other is bound to fill me and color my experience. But to whom shall I open myself? Thor and Jupiter were beaten more than a thousand years ago; and their friends won't deny that. The Vedas may be very wise books, and very deep; and Brahma may be a very great god, but I do not imagine that he is going to succeed much in the end. On the other hand I think Christ is going to win this world, for he has already got hold of the strongest race; and I am pretty sure there is superior strength and safety in the sphere to which he belongs.

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V.

I SEE that pedestrianism is felt to be a little shabby. People do not generally dare to go on foot, for they fear the loss of social consideration. Indeed, our gentility is but a little more than a question as to the ways in which a man performs his getting-about. A man was respectable to that old British woman because he kept a gig. The time was, when a stranger traveling on foot could not readily find entertainment among the generous planters of the South. Their war with the North will raise some of those chevaliers to the dignity of walkers. The disgrace of punishment is meant to be intensified when some noble prisoner is borne in a cart to his place of death. Old Floyd Ireson "was tarred and feathered and carried in a cart" by the women of Marblehead. I have to confess that I often feel a very positive kindling of the imagination, when a brave

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man and a fine woman go past on proud-stepping horses; and for an instant I partake of the common illusion that these riders are fortune's pets; I even feel some desire to act in a like scene. I did not take to my feet just because my neighbors belonged to the infantry. I was living among the chivalry when I dismounted and betook myself to walking in the dry hot sands; and I think I am as confirmed in the habit as any man should allow himself to be. To return again: Walking is so much practiced by a set of unfortunates, who give no luster to the act, that a man needs to be rich in himself, and very earnest too, before he will dare to assert his liberty to use his legs. In short, pedestrianism is almost entirely surrendered to the

VAGABONDS.

I find these wrecks upon most of the principal roads hereabout. Traveling singly, sometimes in couples, at other times in triplets—a man and two women, or a woman and two men—this social flood-wood floats back and forth between the great cities like broken

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things among the whirls and eddies of an estuary. These tramps are from almost every nation; most of them, however, speak their words with a brogue. To one who can find the nerve necessary to study the picturesque sides of degradation, these people offer much that interests. One naturally inquires if they ever had a chance in life, or whether they have missed it. For the most part they seem as if they had been overtaken and throttled by their own passions; it is probable that they never had a fair start in that race. One can not believe that they were expressly designed to use up the surplus of cold victuals and old clothes, which we are quite glad to bestow on them. When I see one of these men, foot-sore and weary, departing in a dissipated, hobbling gait, I always hope, notwithstanding the curious benevolence I may feel for him, that his cold victuals may so nourish him that he will be able to go a long way.

These strollers prove themselves good soldiers, for they feed on the country through which they go, and they carry little or no luggage. They are unphysiological to the last

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degree, eating as they do, irregularly, stupidly, and at late hours before sleeping. And for most part they appear in low condition — too feeble even to make them good food for the cannon. Though they are generally sober, 'tis very plain that they have not always been so. They have so little about them that is lightsome, one might suppose that laughter and hot dinners were luxuries that depart together, and that pedestrianism is a sad employment.

Vagrant walkers, I judge, have long had possession of these roads. In the year 1768, Mr. E. Hall, of Wallingford, brought these tramps before the public. He writes in the *Connecticut Journal:* "As I have never burdened the public to read, or you to publish any of my productions, I flatter myself the subsequent succinct account will be forgiven. As economy is the watchword of this reign, as candor was of the former, in the courtly and ministerial style, it has crossed the Atlantic, and is in high vogue in America as well as Westminster, the city of the great King. The story is this: A few days since,

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a strolling man in soldier's regimental garb, calling himself James McCannon, with a blazing woman, came into my house in early morn, begged for cider, already three mugs deep, as I was informed; after some admonitions given him, my affairs pressing my immediate departure, I left him in the house, on which he became very boisterous, attempting to pilfer some things, which my domestic discovered; finally carried off a brass save-all, of a stand of candle-sticks (then undiscovered); what else is at present unknown. This, though trifling in its value, intrinsically, but as an ancient patrimonial legacy of high estimation, not only is a standing evidence of their prudent economy, but *ex vi termini* a memento to economy to save-all. And hereby I beg leave to give warning to all families, to beware of such strolling pilferers, if they would save all. I beg leave to ask the public, whether it would not be of public utility, to have task-masters in every town, to compel them to labor, as they are passing every day in our streets, and will be probably more and more; or some other similar salutary measure."

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These waifs appear for the most part to be meekly resigned to that fate which thrusts them out and dooms them to straw and cold victuals. I never knew one to make the mistake of calling at any other place than the back door, or of asking for any lodging better than a barn. Once in a while you can find one who has not yet given up his fight with the world and fate.

Outcasts as they are, it is interesting to note their human ways, and their conformity to the general drift of society. The men, even in small things, never lose a certain attentiveness toward their women. Then, too, these walkers always lie abed late on Sundays, just like honest people. Walking is their business, and on that day they stop work. A cleanish shirt sometimes makes its appearance on this day, but quite rarely though. They always give some attention to their toilet, frequently stopping to remove some of the chaff and straw which sticks to their hair and beards. Striking cuts of the mustache are often affected, and suggest that the man has worn glossy hats and gay neck-ties and flaming vests, and has shone in city places.

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Their great thankfulness is not always courtly, a little abject rather; but still it is valuable as showing their formal adherence, at least, to the principle, which I trust will yet prevail, that love and kindly magnetism are fair equivalents for bread and meat. One man evidently proud of his good hand-writing, once called for a pen and paper, and, to pay for his dinner, wrote a recipe for making ink. This man had learned book-binding in London, and when encouraged by the boys, liked to display his knowledge. Another bestows his thanks with a proud humility that makes you think of a duke in disguise. Some make such wild expressions of gratitude, and declare such a generous readiness to part with all they have to succor their benefactor should he ever come to need, that one can not help surmising that the fellows are doing a bit of sly humor at his expense.

It is hard to stand before these sin-scarred souls and not feel some of that interest which attaches to all things human. They often make a feeble reaching forth to get your recognition, and to find in you some kind of social warmth.

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Here is a man who looks up with such mendicant entreaty, and from so great a depth, as from the bottom of a pit, that I think it would take fathoms of rope to bring him to daylight. But there are those who do not call for recognition; their eyes smite you with such force that you almost want to retaliate with a stick.

Notwithstanding Bulwer has given us that very lovable old vagabond, Gentleman Waife, still the tramps are not so picturesque, nor do they justly fill so large a place in literature, as Zincalli, or Gipsies. Now that I have reached these vagabonds, I will tell my story of

AN EGYPTIAN.

When I was traveling in New York, my attention was arrested by a tent in the road. It was shaped like an oven, and made of thick, green stuff, with some additional blankets fastened on the arch to make it impervious to the rain. The lining of the tent was made of a reddish figured cloth. Near by stood a covered wagon; and at the opening of the tent, seated idly on an inverted pail by the fire, was a swarthy, black-eyed and black-haired man,

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with nothing uncommon about his dress except a gaudy vest. All this promised to give some new phase of vagabondage. Mr. Oldcastle, my companion, having little sentimental interest in the vagrant species, advanced to the tent with something of the air of a hound that had scented unusual game, and began the dialogue.

"What are you doing here?"

"Camping." If the man had been made of wood he could not have exceeded the laconic indifference of that single word.

"What's your business?"

"I am a coppersmith, and my lady reads fortunes." The dignity of that answer was unique. People who live in houses and never stroll, sometimes show that they are a little ashamed of their callings, but this man was above that weakness.

"What nation are you?"

"I am an Egyptian," said the stroller, almost with solemnity. I knew the Gipsies called themselves by that name, and my curiosity was up.

"Oh," said I, you are a Rommany Chal, eh?"

"Do you speak Rommany?"

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My question had penetrated the man with respect, and he flashed out into sight in a smile and was ready for a trade in words. I was fresh from the reading of Borrow's Lavengro and Rommany Rye, and was glad of an opportunity to prove the truth of his remarks on the Gipsy language. The stroller was an English Gipsy, and spoke our tongue with remarkable precision and purity of accent. His definitions of the words I gave him were generally the same as those given by Borrow. Still the atmosphere of the man made me feel as if I were dealing with a thorough liar. I left the nomad with a flavor of wildness in my mouth, which for an instant made our house-keeping tame enough.

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VI.

I HAVE said that a circle described with a twelve-mile radius, and comprising four hundred and fifty-two square miles, will make a field of observation large enough for any but a superficial man. But I now think that a field so large will be too great for a thorough man. We are altogether too telescopic in our vision, and therefore never really know what is going on near us. We look too much at things in bulk. For this reason the microscope excites my wonder and respect quite as much as the telescopes of Herschel and Rosse. I have noticed that people are apt to pride themselves on taking comprehensive views. For my part, I think a good deal may he said in favor of narrow views — views got by shutting one eye.

When a man is particularly hungry for something fresh, and when he is eager for dis-

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covery, he cannot do better than to begin his search the instant he gets out of doors. I do not see any particular reason for his getting on a horse and starting off at a flying pace to find something juicy. I feel elated, and humbled, too, when I make a little discovery pretty near my door. I am humiliated because my superficiality has made me overlook so much; and I am elated to think that it will be a great while before I have sucked everything dry. A devout man is receptive to the spirit of perennial improvement, and seldom needs to go far. He does not belong to the class of whom it is said, "having eyes, they see not." If a man keeps his eyes and ears open he will find much that is meant particularly for him. He is well fed if he finds nothing more succulent than one of these dry

LICHENS.

These humble plants are a numerous tribe and they inhabit every spot hereabouts more fully than any place with which I am acquainted. They have possession of all the

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trunks of the trees in the woods, and have pushed on their pioneers to the very twigs. Old roofs, and old fences, and walls, and bowlders are all spattered and crusted by this meek vegetation. The cliffs of Mount Carmel are painted with lichens which at the distance of a mile show as agreeably as frescoes.

Lichens that grow on the ground are not generally so noticeable as those living on wood and stone, yet some of the most important ones are peculiar to the soil. The northern and temperate regions of the earth are the proper home of these plants. They have been found on mountains at the height of eighteen thousand two hundred and twenty-five feet: this, their highest limit, is only eleven hundred and seventy-five feet lower than the highest point yet reached by man. These comparatively invisible things, although everywhere present, are nature's delicate under-clothing, which she is in no haste to exhibit except to her intimates and admirers.

In order to give a greater degree of clearness to these notes, it now becomes necessary to write with some little scientific precision.

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With the *fungi* and *algæ*, the lichens are almost at the bottom of vegetable life. They consist generally of "flat expansions, which are crustaceous rather than foliaceous or leaf-like." They are sometimes "pulverulent, dry, or leathery, sometimes thick, woody or fungous." They cling by their under surfaces to the substances on which they grow, "while by the upper they draw their nourishment directly from the air." In organization they are far below the most lowly plant that produces flowers. "Their fructification is in *cups* or *shields*, resting on the surface of the thallus, or more or less immersed in its substance, or else in pulverulent spots scattered over its surface."

The lichens should be distinguished from the mosses, with which, in common language, they are generally confounded. The latter send up a stem which bears the fructification in a manner similar to the flowering plants. If one wishes to get a clear conception of the great gap existing between the lichen and some highly organized plant, like an oak for example, which has roots, stem, branches,

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leaves, flowers, and a proper fruit, let him conceive of that tree as being deprived of its parts one after another until it is reduced to a single leaf, with only an acorn cup sitting upon it, and then let him suppose that this leaf is glued to a rock or an old log.

Obscure and neglected as are these dry little plants, they have nevertheless played, and are still playing, an important part on the world's stage. "The greater part," says Brande, "are of no known use" to man; "but some, as the reindeer moss, (*Cladonia rangiferina,*) the Iceland moss (*Cetraria icelandica*) and various species of *Gyrophora*, are capable of sustaining life either in animals or man. The Iceland moss, when deprived of its bitterness by boiling, becomes indeed a diet recommended to invalids. Others are used as tonic medicines, as *Variolaria faginea*, and *Parmelia parietina.* Their principal use is, however, that of furnishing the dyer with brilliant colors; orchall, cudbear, and perolle, with many more, are thus employed." Old ladies in the country, who are doctors on instinct, and are given to dosing their children and their children's children,

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sometimes prescribe for colds a drink made from lungwort, (*Sticta*,) a lichen which grows on the north side of maple trees. But all these are trivial uses. The great office of the lichens has been to prepare the earth for higher races of plants, and finally for man himself. These plants, deriving their nutriment from the air, and being comparatively independent of that to which they are attached, are the first to take possession of the rocks, and their remains mingled with grains of mineral are washed down into the hollows to make a home for plants which have roots and are dependent on a soil.

The colors of the lichens are exceedingly varied; the prevailing tints being neutral and sober — such as subdued greens, grays, slates, browns, and stone colors, which last are the proper lichen colors; all, however, have a tint of green. Positive colors are exceedingly rare. I have seen only one lichen that shows any kind of red. Yellow and orange are used with considerable freedom, but still very rarely when compared with the great mass of dull colors. It would be strange,

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too, if a man's words on this theme should not prove to be a little dun-colored.

These thirsty things are no proper aquatics, but still they are exceedingly sensitive to all the degrees of moisture. An old roadside wall, though everywhere spotted with lichens, always exhibits a thicker coating of them wherever it is shaded by a tree. They are a petpetual shadow on the wall. A cluster of moss-grown trees shading a group of bowlders richly painted with lichens, makes a picture that often stops me in my walks through the pastures. A rock lying in an unusually damp situation, generally exhibits some new varieties or species of lichen. These plants are not varnished like leaves, and are, therefore particularly adapted to absorbing moisture from the air. On a rainy day they imbibe, and dilate like crackers soaked in water, becoming very lively in color.

All trees have more or less of these parasites, if they can be called such; but a tree in condition for the finest growth generally has the fewest of them. A half-dead tree often makes a wonderful display of large lichens.

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Still they are not dependent on the tree for support, for many of them thrive equally well upon a stone.

I have found thirteen species of lichen on a single apple-tree; and I notice also that they have followed some order in their coming to take possession. The first that makes its appearance comes when the bark is yet smooth and green. This advances steadily upward as the tree grows, always keeping in advance of the other species. It is a small kidney-shaped blotch of a grayish color, and is well dotted with small brown spots no larger than the dots I make with a pen. These spots are the fructifying organs. Sooner or later four other similar lichens make their appearance on the tree. They differ in color, but have the same kind of fructification. These are easily overlooked and require a low microscope to develop their beauty.

The next lichen that comes, (*Physcia stellaris*,) has a light dun color; it is flat and full of sinuosities and rounded subdivisions, much like the antlers of a deer. It is seldom more than an inch in diameter. It generally settles at

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the base of a twig or fruit-spur, and its advance is about seven years behind that of the youngest growths of the tree. This lichen when it gets older, shows little cups with white rims and dark interiors, almost like the liquor of whortleberries. Sometimes when not larger than the point of the pencil with which I make my notes, it has its little cup barely visible to the naked eye. In the older specimens the cups accumulate and pile up till they look like some of the tree corals.

Simultaneously with this lichen a greenish yellow and smaller one (*Theloschistes parietinus*) is sparingly introduced. It requires a microscope to exhibit its delicate tracery. A little later, too, tufted lichens come on; they are like low-branching trees, and have flat branchlets. The first (*Ramalina calicaris*) is of a dull bluish green; it is often the most abundant lichen on a tree, and it does not show its cups until it is an inch high. The other (*Theloschistes chrysophthalmus*) is greenish orange, is seldom more than a fourth of an inch high, and is never abundant; it has dark orange cups. These two lichens never get so high up a tree as do the others.

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When the tree gets older and its bark changes, a large greenish lichen, (*Parmelia caperata*,) takes possession with others; a single specimen of this often grows to be a foot in diameter, making it altogether the most conspicuous kind in this region. It sometimes almost entirely envelops an old apple-tree; but after a time the tree generally becomes divested of this crust. After this, and when the bark has becomes rich in rottenness, then proper mosses make their appearance.

The species of lichen which first take possession of a rock are little more than greenish incrustations, called bissus, which finally make a kind of soil for the more showy mosses and lichens. On this stone near my door I have found five different pulverulent lichens, that might be easily taken for mere weather-stains. These cover nearly the whole surface of the rock, and each one of them is about six inches in diameter. They appear like blotches made by the spreading out and drying of some thick liquid that had been spilt on the stone. In their centers are large black grains like kernels of gunpowder, or onion

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seeds; these grains are the fructification. One of these lichens has just a faint blush of lilac; the rest are respectively black, gray, iron-gray, and a rich yellow or orange. It is these that give color to the rocks. Sometimes a long piece of roadside wall gets a rusty iron color from this yellow granulated lichen. In some spots I find the granulations have accumulated and begun to peel off, carrying little pieces of grit with them to make a real soil.

Of all the lichens growing on old wood, the *Cladonia cristatella* deserves especial attention. This is shaped like a goblet; it often grows three-fourths of an inch high, and it bears its fruit in bright scarlet masses on the edge of the cup. This lichen grows in rotten spots on old fences. It is sometimes found on a mat of leaves at the foot of a pine tree, and again on the ground, although in this case there is always some vegetable matter in the soil to which it clings. A low decaying stump is its favorite haunt. The outer edge of the stump is frequently encircled by a line of these goblets, as by a string of coral beads. Long lines of these

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scarlet cups often stretch from the ground to the top of the stump. On the larger patches of rotting wood, these lichens stand as thickly as wine-glasses on the shelves of a crockery-store. In the early spring when the snow has settled down from the tops of the stumps, these plants gleam like coals of fire, and they burn into the heart and brain. On those days when the winds are hostile, I sometimes go to a sunny hollow to re-kindle my imagination by draughts from these fiery goblets.

I think I may say something about my relations to the lichens, for I have lived somewhat intimately with them. I am a pruner; and the practical man who employs me is vigilant against the insects that prey on the fruit and shelter themselves on the trees. I must be executive and not maunder; so I labor along diligently scraping off the loose bark, and mosses and lichens; but I feel all the time as if I were doing a vulgar thing like defacing frescoes and tearing down tapestries. I suppose this practical man is in some way needful to me; I too, might become a good deal mossy were it not for the hard

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scrapings I get from him. But then it don't always feel good to be made so bare, and so very real. I have to get very near the lichens, and I find that the smaller ones are the most beautiful. These little things have sorcery about them; and one had best not come too close to them. I think they are getting their revenge by fascinating me a little. I don't dare to look at them much; I have to work with my eyes averted a little; still I cannot entirely resist their charm. One of these lichens has a light brown cup; and when I look at it, it penetrates me like glances from the eye of a woman, and I forget to look at the sun-glints on the river and at the mountains when they are violet.

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VII.

I NOTICE that a man, whether he be riding or walking, is always enveloped in a cloud of thoughts and impressions which touch him only by their finest points, and which can scarcely be said to make a part of his conscious feeling, and much less a part of his conscious thought. All these may affect him badly, or they may be as soothing to him as any melody. Among other conclusions, I have inferred from this, that a man may have and does have a great deal of latent happiness; something very different from active pleasure-seeking, and conscious enjoyment. I find that all our gains and victories are gradually turning themselves into this latent happiness, and that we have to make an effort from time to time in order to know just how happy we are. This is a kind of invested happiness I like; it yields more solid income than any "three

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per cents," or "five-twenties." I expect to find that the hoarding of treasures in heavenly places, is but a little more than getting this latent happiness which saves us from evil. We are told that this delicate cloud of experiences which surrounds us, is referable to spirits. Well, the philosophers who are bent on ultimate analysis, may pronounce the trunk of our tree to be this or that, but I shall not concern myself with their dicta in these notes, provided I find wholesome browsing on the leaves and twigs.

It occurs very frequently when I am walking that some one of these nebulous experiences becomes solid and tangible, so that I can turn it about in my hand to count its spots and note how it is striped. Such happenings are not the least important to a walker and looker. One of these befell me to-day. I am arrested by this natural-colored house at a crossing of the roads. It is a large one, and hints at ideas of hospitality and warm sociality in the mind of its builder. The door hangs ajar on one hinge; the windows are partly filled with fragments of empty

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sash; and clapboards hang suspended by single nails. A dense thicket of self-sown maples is growing between the house and the road. Clumps of chestnuts, oaks, alders, and shrubs have crept in stealthily from the woods toward all sides of the house, until they have obliterated every trace of domesticity from the scene, except the old shell itself. Before my legs can carry me away from the place, my mind has begun to collect all the impressions which have been made on it by innumerable

OLD HOUSES.

I have had a good deal of experience among old houses. I find them everywhere. I have lived in them, and I have visited friends who live in them. I have in a small way experienced ownership of old houses. Indeed I should not like to live where the houses are all new. I think I am attracted to an old house by the same instinct that makes me pick for the moldiest bits of cheese on the plate. I like houses, as well as men, that have seen life. What do I care for houses or men that

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are only new and stylish? I try to encourage them by saying, "You are not to blame for your youth: 'tis something you will outgrow; when you have done that then I may attend to you."

Whatever I say on this theme will necessarily have an oldness about it; and this brings to mind a remark of a neighbor who never is afraid to speak his mind to me: "Your talk," said he, "has this excellence; it never has anything new in it. As to any instruction to be got from it, one might as well talk to himself; yet it is easier to listen to you than to soliloquize." I winced all over at that speech, and tried to say forty things, but could not say one.

There are scarcely any houses in our country that are much more than relatively old. I notice that in regions timbered with beech and maple and hemlock, the buildings get to be old when quite young; while in places where the oaks and more resinous pines abound, they have a vigor of frame that is admirable, and look hearty until very aged.

One of our old houses built in the colonial

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times, has, for all I know, as much power over the emotions as a much older one across the sea. This is especially true if a man be not very well read, and is a little indolent too; for a good deal of reflection is necessary in order to get the whole of an ancient thing. I shall not concern myself with any of the colonial houses I have seen: but only with such as I see everywhere — either going to decay over the heads of Puritan occupants, or filled with alien broods, or given up to briefest ruin and utter desolation.

To own but little is a good thing. Exclusive possession I find does a great deal to canker one's enjoyment. Let me see a lichen on my roof, and I feel as I did when they first told me I was becoming gray. Let me detect some rottenness in my house, and I feel as if my very bones were carious too. Nevertheless, I like to note all the signs and modes of decay in some old house for which Providence has in no way made me responsible; I can then give a lazy sympathy to all those natural forces which are always so busily at work reducing our best fabrics to dust and rottenness.

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Here is an old house settled at one corner, a victim of some treachery in the cellar. Here is another all aslant, that hints at unfaithful carpentry. This other with sunken roof and bulging sides, seems oppressed with life-weariness, and ready to give up and collapse. I walk around an old house and note the rottenness that is feeding on the threshold and the window-sills, and the corners of the sash, and the cornices. I see the green tufts of moss seated on the door- and window-caps on the shady side of the house. I see the opening joints, the holes about the nail-heads, and the weather-stains — whiteness here, and a gathered blackness and rottenness there. The shingles, notched, worn thin, and spotted with lichens, are warped until the old roof looks like gray scroll-work. I observe all these and enjoy the flavor of moldiness I get from them.

When an old house is utterly deserted, all its accessories stand ready to help carry out the desolation. The domestic weeds, plantain, nettles, burdock and chickweed spring up with increased vigor. The hop-vine crawls

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along the ground to find a fence or some small object to climb. Poison ivy takes possession of the cherry-tree. The caraway and fennel — much liked by mother and the girls, and a little scorned by father and the boys — come up feebly in the confusion. The maple trees cast down sticks to perplex the annual mower. And venturing on the scene, the explorer disturbs the toads that find good squatting among the rank weeds. He looks down the well at a fluid as repugnant as a draught from a witch's cauldron. The door-stone sunken at one edge, affords a sunning place for adders that on his approach glide into some hole, flirting their tails as they disappear. But he never thinks of resting on the ground, it has such a seeming foulness.

Every town has its oldest house. It is quite as interesting as the oldest inhabitant; 'tis so dense with the life of men and women. A house gets to seem much like the body of a man. The old-fashioned nails in the finishing, the quaint door-fastenings, the bricks lying askew on the chimney-top, are all radiant with a human light. I am always a little abashed

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when I enter an old untenanted house, I find so many people there. I feel the need of an introduction. I meet the projector of the house, whose plans were limited by his necessities and by his private needs for a house. I meet the builder, who understood houses in their general adaptability to human wants. I meet the mother and the children, and the children's children. I meet all those who have brought young wives into it; all those who have come a-wooing, and all those any way related to it by ties of consanguinity. The obsolete moldings and queer finishings of the best room; the worn places on the floors and stairway; the marks of shovel and tongs on the woodwork of the great fire-place; the tally marks scratched on the cellar and chamber doors — four perpendicular marks, with a fifth one drawn diagonally across them — marks telling of transactions in apples, or corn, or potatoes; the nut-brown beams and rafters of the unfinished chambers and garrets — timbers that still show that the unknown ax-man understood his business and was in earnest to do good work, for his ax was sharp and his

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blows were struck with equal force and at regular intervals upon his log; — all these are full of human interest, and I notice them with the same zest as I look upon men.

Old houses are indeed so humanized — their former inhabitants never seem to get entirely out of them — and they so strongly impress the imagination, it is no wonder that simple folk have been so ready to make them the habitations of ghosts. Then, too, the weight of remorse and sin is so great, it is very natural that this phantom brood should be thought to be angry souls who have been wronged in body, or estate, or in some right of the affections. The period between the time of Salem witchcraft and modern spiritualism, has witnessed a great diminution of this airy population, but with the new beliefs it will be strange if the old houses do not once more become tenanted; indeed, if we search somewhat closely, men and women will be found who show a readiness to people their neighbor's house with this unpaying tenantry. After reading Owen's "Footfalls," one feels unneighborly and not quite up to

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common sense, if he does not believe in and welcome such inhabitants.

Houses that were built by rich landlords for their tenants, seldom have much interest for me. But an old house, whose projector began small, who planned, economized, and hoped for it, and who built considerately and put his heart into it, can not fail to attract an increasing interest the older it grows. I get a somber delight from the examination of old houses; in short, I find them every way interesting except as things to own or live in. An aged pair with cooling hearts and abated energies, and living alone in an old house—damp, and mold, and spiders, and rottenness gaining foothold in the cellar; cobwebs, and lumber, and dust stealing downward from the garrets and chambers; or a young couple without the enterprise and energy to overcome and rejuvenate their old house, but contented to settle down and grow older with its oldness, these are aspects of life in these old buildings that one does not always like to ponder.

Old houses do get a good many taints be-

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sides bad smells; they become morally tainted. I don't think the world is ready for the most permanent houses. People have to build new ones from time to time in order to escape from the inheritance of sin and death that fills an old dwelling like a vapor. A man who has made his house the scene of a seduction, followed by the suicide of the wronged husband, may be very glad of any pretext for building a new one, and for letting the theater of his crime find its way to the swiftest decay. But old houses, my faith assures me, will some time grow sweeter as they gather years, and will be filled with shining souls from the world of light.

My neighbor, to whom I have referred, has one of these old houses. Fifteen years ago he built himself a smaller one near by, and gave up the old mansion to the usual course of down-hill experiences. The reason he gives for building the new house never seems quite satisfactory, for it is not nearly so well situated as the old one. He always manifests some uneasiness when questioned on this topic, showing a disposition to turn the conver-

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sation toward other things. He could not have been actuated by any motives of economy, for I am sure it would have been cheaper at that time, to have thoroughly repaired the old one, and added some ornaments and conveniences. He then would have had a sweet new house with the flavor and sanctity of age still clinging to it, and it would have made him a more dignified home than his present one. There is a sense of mystery about the matter which at times almost stifles me.

People who live a good deal in isolated farm-houses, seem to dwell in a sort of social twilight, and they have a way of looking at one another that reminds me of owls in the daytime. They observe one another from stations so remote that they never see some things, and what they do see is often distorted by the intervening haze. The life in these houses may seem tame and sluggish; but still it is full of slumbering passion, and from time to time it wakes up and makes tragedy for those concerned. I mean therefore to find out why my neighbor built his new house.

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I had one day been sitting on the door-stone, in the shade of his old house, and had been engaged in breathing its atmosphere and in turning over some of these old thoughts, when I found I had lost my whereabouts in the day. Starting for home I met my neighbor and asked him to set me right.

"You look," said he, "as if you ought to be set right as to the time of the world."

"I am only a little confused by having an hour or two glide away from me unobserved," I answered; nevertheless I felt hit.

"I often see you mousing around my old house here You allow your mind to be occupied by the most trivial objects, and you seem dead to all the great questions of the age. What is such a man as you good for?"

I did not tell him — perhaps I could not: but I went away wondering why he was so nettled by my visits to his old house.

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VIII.

I HAVE observed that people like to glance at the contents of a basket brought home by the excursionists who have spent a day in the woods, or at the glen, or on the mountain. Curious pebbles, greasy scraps of paper, leaves from unfamiliar species of trees, bits of bread, wild flowers which for some cause were deemed worthy of plucking and are carefully done up in grass or leaves, fragments of crackers, and corners of rock knocked off and picked up for good geological reasons. I have also noticed that a pedestrian brings home another basket filled with things that he is in no haste to exhibit. For it may be filled with homely stuff of which he is a little ashamed, or it may hold some gay trifles very interesting to himself but utterly worthless to any one else; trifles which like butterflies will suffer a great deal by handling

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for exhibition. When I get home I like to sit down and see what I have collected in my basket, and empty it with a leisurely reflectiveness. It often happens that things come out much changed from what they were when first picked up and put in: they are sometimes inclined to grow. To-day I found in my basket a picture, an experience, a thought, and some facts pertaining to

SKUNK-CABBAGE.

I have been in nineteen of the States, but Connecticut is the only one that has taken the trouble to make me acquainted with this potent herb. Skunk-cabbage (*Symplocarpus fœtidus*) is an herbaceous perennial that delights in wet places; still, I have found it growing thriftily on an apron of gravel washed out into a swamp from the adjacent knolls. It does well in the wet pastures and meadows; but it appears to prefer a shady situation. I sometimes find an acre of it growing in the woods along the Quinnipiac, where the grasses have not crept in. These large patches, surpass in interest my cabbage-garden, and my

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field of pic-plant. I have often thrust my head into the large thickets of alder, red maple, and spice-bushes overrun with wild grape-vines, in order that I might look after the cat-birds, and I have been diverted by the luxuriance of the skunk-cabbage growing there in company with the brakes and wild turnips.

This plant gives us our earliest wild flower. Its purple sheath inclosing the spindle that holds the proper flowers, grows scarcely higher than the stubble of the meadows, and it frequently obstructs my feet during an early spring walk about the farm. The leaves do not appear until some time after the blossom. Young people hunt out the most sunny spots in the woods to find the earliest flowers of the trailing arbutus, but they don't see the skunk-cabbage which is blooming vigorously in the wet meadows. Nature seems to thrust up the broad leaves of this plant to remind us afresh of her wonderful exuberance, which we have been forgetting all winter.

Although the skunk-cabbage belongs to the same family (*Aracæ*) with the wild turnip or "Jack-in-the-pulpit," it has also one very

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aristocratic relative, the *Calla Ethiopica* of our green-houses. I made this discovery with some such feeling as I had when I found that the grocer on the corner was a brother to the governor.

When I walk about among the dense growths of this plant, reaching up to my thighs, I call forth an odor somewhat striking — excitable people may call it awful and not be very wrong, for it inspires me, too, with a sort of awe. I don't wonder that people try to propitiate the powerful thing in order that it may help their maladies. It has been found to be an anti-spasmodic. Most herbs, as well as this, are medicinal to me. Nature is a fine old herb-doctress; she lets me walk around among her simples, and she cures me of some things without requiring me to swallow any of her skunk-cabbage. About the last of June its leaves begin to lose their tropical luxuriance, and grow quite yellow and rusty.

I think people suffer some because they do not get enough of what they call the big things. Fishing from the middle of the pond,

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bringing down your game from the highest tree-tops, and bringing up mud by deep-sea soundings are all grand things, I admit, but I have need of smaller ones. Like a geologist among the rocks, I am glad when I can any where find an angle that admits of being knocked off. The summer so overwhelms me with its profusion, that I feel a little famished sometimes in trying to deal with the immense bulk of things, and I am inclined to think that nature has not cut her meat fine for me as careful mothers do for their youngest children. This reminds me of another speech made to me by my neighbor.

"Before you amount to much as a thinker," said he, "you will have to begin to do your own carving." I think I should like to carve him a little if I only felt stout enough.

But to resume: If I look about me with some diligence, I most always find that nature has prepared some little thing for me, that is just a mouthful or

JUST AN EYE FULL.

It is a picture in the early spring — I find many such near the foot of these basaltic

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mountains — and it is valuable only as a specimen brick from the house I live in. The fore-ground is a narrow lowland meadow faintly green with springing grass and bunches of poke and fetid hellebore; and still somewhat brown with last year's stubble and old tufts of rank, wild grasses. On either side is a moderate swell of ground timbered with tall chestnuts that stretch their arms over the little meadow. A brook, now pouring over chance dams made of sticks and leaves, and now eddying in the bends under the tussucks where the trout lie, is hurrying along in its devious channel. A crouching, creeping, and stealthy fisherman, casting his hook here and there, animates the scene. In the middle ground is a white farm-house, half obscured by the purple mist of the apple and maple trees. The neighborhood is unfamiliar to me, and so I am sure the dwellers in that house are all happy and shining, for I have not had time to dissipate the illusion which at first makes us see an elysium in every new place. If I change my position I bring into view an old red house, a mill and its dam, all seen through the grayness of the inter-

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vening tree-trunks. The brooks in this State only play as much as they can after turning water-wheels at all the sportive points in their careers. The background is the side of Mount Beseck: gray with rugged rocks, black with patches of pine, and near enough to inspire a mingled admiration and awe.

To make his walking the most pleasurable and profitable, I often think a man needs to be emancipated not only from his ignorance and prejudices, but also from much of his knowledge and culture. Having wrought in a variety of callings, I have come to be a little of many things, farmer, printer, horticulturist, pedagogue, landscape-gardener; and I have chosen my friends from the trades wherein I have labored. I seldom like to walk alone; some one of these friends often goes with me. My friend Hokum, the farmer, and Kent, the ornamental gardener, have frequently walked with me. They are both progressive enough; still they are somewhat narrow-minded, as men of one calling are apt to be, — though broad enough in their way.

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It often happens that I do not see much except what they point out, and their special criticisms have kept me from enjoying many things which I knew might be pleasurable. Hokum is severe on all signs of bad farming, and Kent is always sure to find fault with the arrangements and surroundings of the farm-houses. I have had much difficulty in getting along with him. Still he is so elegant, refined, and progressive in all his ideas, I have felt as if I ought not to get away from his influence. But to-day, without having had any quarrel with him, I found myself free to take in all the homely beauty there is in this farm-house, at the turn of the road.

A large, gambrel-roofed building, standing beneath elms, maples, and mazzard cherry-trees. The second story projects on all sides six inches beyond the first, and the garret projects as much beyond the second; giving the house a look as if standing on its little end. It has all the quaintness that any of our old-time New England houses can offer. Through a three-cornered opening made by the looped-up white curtains in the green-

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shuttered window of the best room, I see the top of a mahogany chair. The garret window is propped up with an ear of corn set on end. In the narrow front yard are a few shrubs of lilac, syringa and box. On one side is the garden, with a row of currant bushes in the grass, a wildling grape-vine clambering at will over an arbor, many tall weeds of last year's growth everywhere, (for it is early spring,) and a wall to surround the whole, as if to keep the confusion from spreading over the rest of the farm. In the rear is the wood-pile, the ash-house and ley-leach. Across the road, and almost exactly in front of the house, are the barns, sheds, and cattle-yards, with all their living scenes plainly in view from the parlor windows. In the road near the barn is the big ox-cart, its tongue resting on the ground, and the clumsy, unpainted ox-sled, with its four great stakes roughly finished with an ax. In the road on the other side of the house are oak and chestnut logs, the last showing rich yellow ends; new chestnut rails and stakes in piles, and cedar posts showing red hearts that are aromatic. Mossy walls

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and wooden fences stretch away from the house along the roads and underneath the trees.

I was glad of my liberty to see the old place by my own light, unmingled with any of Kent's fastidious illumination. If I were an artist and called on to make a picture of what I have attempted to describe, it should be done lovingly and with pre-Raphaelite fidelity. Nevertheless, when I come to fix up my home I am going to get Kent to do it.

I threw off Hokum's influence a long time ago. One day he and I were walking in a retired neighborhood when we fell into discourse.

"I like to walk here in Connecticut," said I, "these old farms have so much nature about them — in short they are so wild. Out West nature seems to be a good deal startled from her repose and to be on the retreat. But in this old town she appears to be stealing back to take possession again, and to harmonize all our works. Fine old trees are so plenty on every farm, they quite take off the harshness and angularity which characterize

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farms in the new states. With all its manufacturing enterprise, this State is quite sylvan; and the people, with all their civilization, seem like foresters. Just notice how nature has stolen back and put her lichens and mosses on the houses and fences and the very trees the people have set out. She has planted hedges of briar and elder alongside all the fences; she has planted groups of shrubs by all the rocks; and she has put clambering vines on everything. This is a country that deserves to be looked at."

"You mean," said Hokum, "that the farms are all grown up with trees and brush; but I don't call that great farming."

"Mr. Hokum," said I, "your remark smells of the barn." He had broken so many of my bubbles, I answered more abruptly than is my habit.

"Ha! ha! ha! I like to see things just as they are if I see anything;" and then he laughed again.

"That is all well enough," I answered, growing cooler; "but your ideas always have a squint about them as if you looked at things

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through one of the bows of your ox-yoke. Considering that Connecticut has sent schoolmasters to the South, pioneers to the West, and has invented, manufactured and distributed so many conveniences for civilized living, it is not strange that her farms left to father and the youngest boys should become rather picturesque."

"I think your own affairs would prosper better, if you could be as practical when abroad, as you are when at home." He looked grave when he said that.

"Friend Hokum,"—I had now become entirely cool—"I know that some of your thoughts are as sweet as your clover-lot, and as beautiful as your rye-field when the wind plays over it, but then you have many ideas that smack of your farm. For example, when we visited the Central Park you seemed to admire everything, but after looking at those beautiful lawns, you said, as if still lacking something, 'I should like to see a great field of nice red clover in bloom, somewhere about here.'"

"Yes, I remember it," said he very good-

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naturedly, "but I am going to stick to the clover."

We understand each other now; and when we walk together he is free to enjoy all the good farming, and I am free to enjoy all the rest. Hokum is a good fellow; and I mean to have his advice about

MY FARM.

I have a farm; 'tis rugged, rocky, small,
And round it creeps a tumbling, spotted wall.
And by it proudly goes the great highway,
Where covered wagons chuck and grind along
With four big horses, and dog and bucket
Beneath their axle-trees. It feeds a cow,
A sheep, a scrambling, horned goat, and has
A cobbly patch for beans and tucket corn.
And somewhere near its very center, is
A peaty bog, where grow your plumy ferns,
And arrow arum, twisted flags and fetid
Hellebore — a sort of black despondency
Within its heart, you see. Beyond this slough
There is a shaly, stony slope, all lush
With tangled brush, and stunted trees,
And hanging vines; and down it comes
A tinkling rill which springs from underneath

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A jagged, tott'ring cliff, o'erhung with moss
That swings like wool upon the flanks of sheep.
And over this a shade of oak and 'nut,
And purpling ash and pine. My farm — it is
Not much for bread or meat, you say; and yet
'T is mine, and in the flush of spring I have
To build a tower, love my love, and sow
My seed, obey my God, and tell my dream,
And in the fragrant autumn-time I mean
To garner nuts and wine, and cribs of solid corn.

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IX.

I SHOULD be sorry to learn that anything I have said in favor of pedestrianism had increased the burden of any overwrought man, by making him feel that he ought to add a walk to his usual day's work. Walking for such purposes as I have given, is, indeed, a very wholesome sort of amusement, and it is free to everybody. It is not so highly appreciated as it justly deserves to be: for this reason I am going to speak a good word for it. I am a working man, and I spend some of my leisure in walking; from it I derive instruction, gentle exhilaration and contentment; but it by no means follows that for this reason I should attempt to scourge others into my ways. People with new and valuable ideas are generally quite enough given to this kind of persuasion. The walker needs an inspiration somewhat peculiar. If you undertake a walk from any superficial or

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extraneous reason, you will be pretty sure to find it a tedious thing and give me a hard name.

Still, a man who has found the use of his legs, has a right to go aside a little and crow because of his liberty. I like to do so. I sometimes go to the top of Mount Tom and look south to the spires of Fair Haven and to the Sound; east to the passes which lead through the mountains into the valley of the Connecticut; north to the spires of Meriden, and to the hills of Berlin where the poet Percival was born; west to the hills of Prospect, where Roaring Brook, poetized by Willis, pours its small flood over the stairs of trap-rock, and runs away between the cliffs of sand-stone. I do this in order to partly realize the extent of the domain which I hold by the right of eyes and the right of legs. I exult a little over it, for its harvests will await my gathering and its fabrics will improve by being kept out of the market.

But if a man brags much, or rides his hobby faster than a walk, he is, I notice, pretty sure to get some experience that will never

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be pleasant except when remembered and told of. A long compulsory night-walk with the accompaniment of darkness, or mud, or rain, or ice, is one of the straits into which a daring walker is often betrayed. What does a man know about peaches until he has cracked the stone and eaten the bitter kernel, or of honey, until he has tasted the bee-bread? The pedestrian has never supped on wild meats until he has done some

NIGHT-WALKING.

The man who comes home in the darkness is not the same one who went forth in the morning light. The ideas of a night-walker are hung with shadows. If his thought is luminous, it is with such light as comes from the fox-fire in my wood-yard; but he has keen senses and some modes of procedure peculiar to himself. I have noticed in the night that a man's cheek is the first to warn him of the presence of some object near his head. His legs act automatically, and he can walk further than he could by day. I of-

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ten turn my attention toward my legs, and wonder who it is that has been running that machinery. I have been surprised by unexpectedly reaching some point on a familiar road, and I could account for my early arrival, only by supposing that I had been asleep while my legs had kept on at work.

The eyes of a night-walker are often small help, except to guide him into the middle of the road where the dust and mud are deepest — and where he finds the surest footing; nevertheless, by the help of the smell and other senses, he manages to pick up many a bit of knowledge that would otherwise have remained ungleaned. By tasting of the leaves and twigs of trees and shrubs in the night, a man can do something to cure his knowledge of its one-sidedness.

The premises of Dennis St. Patrick are unsightly enough by day, but in the night I get such whiffs of air from his sty, that I am ever after constrained to choose other roads. In warm weather the brooks which creep out from among the willows and alders and run under bridges, and the Quinnipiac a quarter

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of a mile off, appeal to my nose with an odor like the taste of fresh-water clams eaten raw. In the harvest months, the meadows and the fields of grain-stubble advertize themselves to the late walker; and there is the smell of full barns. The early fruit in the orchards, and the heaps of apples at the cider-mills, offer up incense to Pomona in the night, and tempt me to infractions of the decalogue. In the winter and early spring-time I get many good smells from the fresh-cut wood-piles by the road and in the farmers' yards. The stenches from slaughter-houses and bone-mills are borne along the earth to the leeward in narrow streams scarcely wider than their sources; but they are nothing to the walker if he holds his nose. On entering a house from a walk in a winter night, I often perceive an unsavoriness that prevents me from thinking at once of sweet home. In summer nights I often breathe perfumes that are strange, mystic, and wondrously sweet. I think them breaths of spicery from over the sea; I think them the odors of all flowers swept together and mixed by nature's most cunning pharmacy;

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they have about them the grandeur of the night and the majesty of the darkness wherein I walk, and I am too happy and reverent to enter on the inquiries prompted by my intellect.

A night-walk over an undulating road gives one a succession of warm and cold air-baths. Passing through a hollow is often like fording a stream. On the way to New Haven I pass a farm, the night air of which is always like a bath of ice-water to my face. A man intending to locate a house, or to select a farm, should do some night-walking if he is looking for a place where his melons and grapes can gather sweetness in the dark.

I am a good deal impressed by the sense of security that lets people lie down and sleep with nothing but a pine door between them and the outer world of darkness. Father, wife, and children, with upturned throats, muscular and shaggy, fair and white, short and pulpy, all sleep in perfect assurance that the great all means them no harm. If I had diamonds to convey, I think I would carry them in the night, and go on foot. Still, I

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have not entirely cast off the vague terror that fills the darkness with shadowy hands that may clutch me from behind.

In the night the human spirit is withdrawn from the spaces it has filled by day, and a man finds the most complete solitude, and liberty to touch things for himself. I never feel bashful when I walk in the night. The shy and shrinking author of the Marble Faun, was a lover of gloom, and at one time walked only at night. A day-walker will put daylight into his work, but a walker in the darkness can hardly fail to fill his writing with dusky thought. The hooting of the owl, the solitary carriage that rushes on me from out the blackness, and then rushes into it again, making a faint crescendo and diminuendo, these, and all the noises of the night, never break the solitude, but seem rather a part of it.

Calling in the night at lonely houses, often gives a man a taste of strange experiences. It is a small thing to ask for a cup of water, but you always drink weirdness with it; and a faint feeling which is born of the night, rip-

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ples along your nerves. Long before midnight on country roads, nearly all lights are put out. Those that remain are unearthly and flitting as *ignes fatui*. Attracted by a gleam of light upon the trees or out-buildings I turn up to a house and the light disappears. I go on my way again, and the flame shines out in some other part of the building. If the building is large, old, and strange, I can, notwithstanding my nineteenth-century skepticism and common sense, always feel a slight disposition to people it with a goblin brood. I once called at a dark house to inquire my way. Standing in the black square of his door-way, a man with one tone gave me the needful directions, and with another he restrained and pacified some mad woman, who darted horror into my veins by frantically commanding me to neither leave anything nor take anything away.

The night-walker travels among enchantments; and it is a long time before he can pass over a road and see things in their daylight relations. Road-side knolls are mountains on the horizon, and the large houses are

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all palatial. This great white house, standing among trees near the sea, is, I am certain, the home of those men and women I have been seeking, a courtly and loving people, who live above care, and whose lives are inspired poems. To-morrow I find that plain Peter Hogeboom lives in that house, and that he believes in little except money, and beefsteaks, and his farm.

As at the close of a market-day we count our remaining coins, to see if we can make that other needful purchase; so at the first hint of a night-walk we count our forces; we draw up and straighten out our legs, moving them sideways, to see what elasticity is left in them, and we note that spot at the pit of the stomach to see if pluck and courage are at home. A failure to get back to your base of operations on the day of your departure is what will make your walk a little too piquant. If your energy fails before getting home, there are some expedients to be tried. In harvest-time it is a small matter to turn aside into a meadow and sleep under the trees, with a covering of new hay, and the stars

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above you. But sleeping out of doors is not always possible. Nearly all the wayside barns keep open doors, and good sleep can be had on the piles of hay and straw. The tramps tell me that they always sleep warmly covered with hay. I know that sleeping in barns is felt to be a rather gross affair; but the other day I had occasion to dig down to the bottom of my bed, and there I found a large flattened sack filled with straw. It occurred to me then that instead of sending me to the barn to sleep, somebody had brought a piece of the barn into the house for me to lodge on: in fact, it seemed to me that with the addition of sundry sheets and blankets, I, too, was sleeping on my straw like any vagabond. I had in one place got to the bottom of civilized society, and had found barbarism there. I dare not dig to the bottom of a good many other things for fear I shall find something there which I can not respect.

There are, I admit, some drawbacks to sleeping in a barn. If I sleep in one belonging to a man who only knows me by sight, I am sure, if I meet him in the morn-

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ing, to feel his thought: "Habits not so good as I supposed; queer, at any rate." If a stranger finds me sleeping in his barn, I know he will be speculating as to the time I was taken with vagabondage, and whether it is yet possible for me to be lifted into good farm society. What is the use of my making explanations to him? He is not expected to know or believe that my little white house under the maple-trees has green blinds; that a brass plate with my name on it, is on the front door, and that this plate is rubbed every morning. How should he know that the butcher, the fish-man and the milkman are all polite to me; and that the minister, the doctor, the judge and the colonel, sometimes find time to talk with me on business; in fact, how should that man know that I am a respectable person, sleeping in his barn?

Men who stay at home appear to dwell behind intrenchments; they are fortified by physical comforts, conveniences, and the respect of their neighbors. But when a man goes a walking among strangers, he has to

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leave his defenses. There is hardly a man so famous but a twelve-mile walk will leave him quite defenseless, and exposed to attacks in the rear. I even suffer when abroad, knowing that I am estimated by feet and inches, pounds avoirdupoise, and supposed ability to pay. I have seen very respectable people quite crest-fallen and angry when they had gotten too far from their trenches. My neighbor Oakley, is agent for the highly solvent Indian Phalanx. He was once in New York and could not get a credit for thirty days. Irritated by finding himself beyond his intrenchments, he said to the merchant with angry dignity, his chin well up and head rolling a little from side to side — "I guess you don't know who we are!"

I once slept in the woods in company with a friend, and in the morning when we were getting our breakfast, a man came along and intimated that our potatoes probably came from some missing hills in his field near by. I wish to say here to the whole world that those potatoes were not stolen. I had brought them from home; they were raised in my

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brother's garden, and for earliness and dryness they surpassed any potatoes which that man ever raised, unless he had more of the nineteenth century in him than I think he had. My friend however has something about him which enables him to travel a great way from his base of operations. I think he goes armed with a kind of politeness and self-respect. With injured innocence and wounded dignity mixed with surprise, he said to the man worried about potatoes, "If you were acquainted with us, I think you would not suspect us of stealing." That vigilant raiser of potatoes subsided at once. My friend is an orderly man, and he always sleeps at home. His three children are in the same room with him; the two eldest in a trucklebed, and the youngest in a crib; the servant-girl is within easy call, and the doctor is within ten-minutes' ride. But then, how could that farmer have known how respectable we were at home, and thus have kept from insulting us?

If a walker fails to get home, and does not like either of the above modes of spending

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the night, he can, as a last resort, rouse up some householder, and, in the name of cash payment, beg lodging of the startled man. Asking at strange houses for entertainment in the name of human brotherhood, is not much in vogue just now; indeed, it is hardly practicable, unless one carry with him a good deal more of brotherhood than is expedient at present. I should prefer, however, to carry my heart instead of a purse, when I go abroad.

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X.

I LIKE to bask in the presence of things, turning my broadest surface toward them to feel their reäction. A walker who cannot do this, has only half learned his trade. Why should I spend all my time in eagerly questioning this pine tree, or that bird in the bush? I have counted the spots on the shell of a terrapin; I have measured the stems of oak leaves; I have put my tongue to the under side of the apples on my tree to taste the salt which the south-east rain has brought from the sea; I have listened to the singing of the locusts, and have found that they begin with a crescendo, quickening the time as they proceed; that they end with a diminuendo, gradually dragging the time; and that their tune is an opus of wonderful symmetry. By such work a man will in time gather a respectable sheaf of gleanings, which in some sense is all his own. But it often happens that the walker

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brings home things better than those he sought after with so much pains. I have found that nature best likes my passive side; hereafter I shall try to indulge her. If we are reverent and receptive enough, one place is about as good for a walk as another. I have yet to find the person, no matter how ill-informed or narrow-minded he may be, who is modest enough to confess that the European tour would be too big a thing for him; but I have seen many people who felt hemmed in at home because they were blind to what was near by, and because they could not make a foreign journey. For the benefit of this suffering class, I will say that I often find myself in very foreign parts when I walk in

AN OLD PASTURE.

A man about to go to England on pleasure, would do well to turn aside into this old grazing place, and re-consider his conclusion that he stands in need of something alien. Should he do so he might find that at present he has no time for any country except Connecticut. I have in time past lusted after

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English lanes and Scotch heather; but when I have walked in this pasture, I have been made ashamed of that lust, and, repenting of it to the very core of me, I now hold that desire in check.

It is not easy to fix the exact age of an old field. This town has been settled one hundred and ninety-five years, and some of its old farm-houses are said to be a hundred and fifty years old. A man who inquires about the ages of these old houses, soon finds himself in a fog. But this pasture is without doubt old enough to have seen some experiences.

It is separated from the road by a low stone wall, surmounted by a line of chestnut rails; across these at regular intervals, are set pairs of chestnut stakes which support another course of rails. The whole fence is painted with lichens, those on the wood-work being quite as large and numerous as those upon the stones. A long line of mossy stones in the bushes, marks the site of a wall which once divided the pasture, and intimates that the lot was once held by two exclusive claim-

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ants, or that one part of it was thought too good to associate with the other. Two or three gray cattle-paths radiate from the barway. Under the large trees and alongside the neighboring wood are some bare spots of earth, made by the cattle going there to ruminate, to fight flies, and to snatch bites of leaves from the overhanging branches. A few tufts of grass and weeds ranker than the rest, spring up here and there and mark the places enriched by the ordure of the cows. One corner richer than the others and fenced off with new rails, has been plowed by some one in hopes of getting turnips and potatoes.

This pasture has been put to nobler uses, for it is everywhere rough with old corn-hills. But the last man brown with tan, who bared his arm and bent his back to the sun to hoe corn here, doubtless found the crop inadequate, for the ground was left without smoothing, and the whole field has gone its own way. Mr. Hokum, who reads an agricultural paper, always hisses at it. It is now quite half-grown up with trees and shrubs and briars. Patches of pale, reddish-green whor-

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tleberry bushes, and dusky-green sweet-fern; round-headed bayberry-bushes, looking like pincushions of dark-green velvet, and blackberry briars a good deal browsed by the cattle; white spots of St. Peterswort, and some plats of grass, green in the spring, but on this dry August day, brown and parched; clumps of white birches, red cedars everywhere, and light-green junipers standing all about like huge saucers. I have looked on the old pasture from an eminence and thought it a table set with dishes for a banquet. In the wet places are soft maples, alders, bushes of feverfew, poison sumach, skunk-cabbage, and miry paths among the tussucks of wild grass. But this wild and deserted bush-picture is not yet given over to despair. It still has a bright destiny. It lies fair; and if helped to a little muck and guano, it could be made to blush with sweet red clover.

For intricacy and variety, an old grown-up pasture is incomparable. Its shrubbery and grouping of trees often make me ashamed of our most studiously planted lawns; these are so tame and feeble. This old pasture always

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appears like a fairy garden waiting for my house to be built in it. But then I suppose the building of a house there would at once destroy its fine order, and then the landscape gardener would have to be called in to patch up some sort of harmony between house and grounds.

The cattle sometimes do a bit of topiary work in a pasture. Near where I walk is an apple-tree which has, between vigorous sprouting and a good deal of annual browsing, at last become a dense and regular cone nearly six feet high. After years of struggle it has become self-protecting; it has now shot up many vigorous shoots, and bids fair to have a great head and to see years of fruitfulness. It is the best example of out-growing repeated disaster that I think of just now; and I always give heed to its word of wisdom.

I often come across the cattle in this pasture; like myself they get a somewhat varied refreshment, for they are not expected to eat much plain herds-grass and clover. As the years creep on, the cows will find less and less entertainment there, and unless the ax

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interferes in their favor, this old feeding-place will be given over to the woodchucks, the rabbits and the squirrels. The men of Connecticut have been doing battle with the trees for upwards of two hundred years; but the spirit of the forest does not yet show the least sign of surrender. If a farmer neglects his pasture for an instant the forest puts forth its old claim to the land. The forest is so indomitable and so perfectly organized, that it always has its pioneer trees ready to go forward and take possession of an old field, no matter how exhausted it may be. Here in Connecticut the red cedar and white birch serve as the advance guard of the forest in its re-occupation of worn-out lands.

The number of aromatic trees and plants in one of our pastures is somewhat remarkable. Here are black birches, red cedar, juniper and sassafras, and bayberry, and the spice-bush, cudweed, skunk-cabbage and sweet-fern. An old pasture breathing out incense, has a perfumed atmosphere, full of poesy and stimulus to artistic endeavor. I am not surprised that the men who frequented these New England

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pastures in their boyhood, are now doing a disproportionate amount of the country's literary work. These pastures are so rich in spicery, I wonder at the short-sightedness of people who imagine the prairies to be uncommonly fertile. A man who has sweet-fern in his back lots, need not go to the lands of myrrh and cinnamon in order to find something to spice his thought, or make his life a richer wine.

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XI.

THE fields are always good walking places; so are the roads when the object of your expedition is distant; and so also are the streets of a town. But a man may not like to walk much where there are dense crowds of men; he may prefer to go by himself among the oak trees and golden-rods; still I always like to feel the human element about me, and I have pleasure in all the signs of man's coming and going. In this old town it is not possible to escape these signs for an instant. Half the forest trees are now growing from stumps left by some forgotten ax-man. And the most I can learn about him is, that he was a considerate man, and that he always let his wits precede the act of his hand; for his stumps were all left low, to encourage the growth of a new forest. What sort of a naturalist is he who

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flies from society to nature, trying to ignore man? Men have their place in nature as well as the woodchucks, and their habits deserve to be studied, even if we only succeed in looking upon them as bats and moles, or at best as a colony of muskrats, having a wonderful providence and industry. It is because I love this human element, that I am always glad of a chance to walk in

THE FOOT-PATHS.

I think Connecticut is somewhat remarkable for these signs of pedestrianism. They are to be found everywhere. The Quinnipiac is a good deal obstructed by dams which hold the water back in ponds. Near these ponds are large shops in which I see men at work in the din and dirt. Foot-paths radiate from these working places and stretch away through the fields and along the roadsides. If I walk in these paths early enough or late enough, I meet solitary men whom I suppose to be the ones employed in these shops.

The amount of human interest that is strung on a foot-path like beads on a string, is im-

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mense. If the soles of my feet ever itch, it is when I discover some new path; the least probability that it will lead me toward my destination is enough to allure me from the right way. The woodchuck's path, leading out from his hole and heap of gravel into the red clover, has interest; so has the musk-rat's path, where it goes down the bank into the water; but an old foot-path in which men and women and children have walked for years, following its course up and down, in and out, through the fields!

These paths are seldom wide enough except for one pair of feet at a time. They have been made by men who walked alone, and who for once were looking at things through their own eyes. If these by-ways have ever been the scenes of much sociality, it has been such intercourse as men have one with another face to back, the one aiming his speech at the rear of his listener's head, and the other flirting his words backward over his shoulder.

These foot-paths have been made by tired and busy men, who have only cared for the

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shortest and easiest ways. It is therefore interesting to note how a path finally gets established in just the best place and leaves no room for new engineering. An old path electrifies a man's weary legs, it is so charged with energy and purpose. Notwithstanding all its directness, a foot-path often finds ways to put on grace and lead you through enchantments: still, it never once loses sight of its purpose. My path leads me across a brook on a plank, and over an old rail fence, worn smooth by many crossings; then it creeps along under the edge of a wood, over the naked roots, and glides down a bank; and taking me over a gully on another plank, it finally lets me out through a bar-way into the great high-road. This miners'-path dips down into a meadow and goes among the daisies, ox-eyes, and the meadow-pinks, and then it winds up a hill on the opposite side. Clothed in the beauty of simple earnestness, both these paths do something to cure me of nonsense. I see many roadside paths marked off from the wagon-track by a green ribbon of grass. They go out of sight in the hollows, reäppear again on the other side, and finally vanish where

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the great road disappears under the distant trees; they all have some of the highway's steady straightforwardness.

I have traveled some in highways, especially those of politics and business; and I have found them dusty. I still find it necessary to travel in those roads, but I shall not promise to say what I see in them. When I can find a side-path or a by-way, I intend to walk in it and make note of what I discover.

Among the pedestrians I see walking in the foot-paths which stretch along the carriage-roads, I find some who deserve mention. They are the men who drive oxen. To speak exactly, they are not pedestrians, neither are they riders; though I often see them a-top of their carts, and witness their heads jerking from side to side as the wheels jolt over the stones. However, the sight of them is suggestive, and I propose, therefore, to mention some things which I do not recollect that any one has ever said

ABOUT OX-TEAMSTERS.

Ox-teaming in the United States is, I notice,

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pretty much confined to the region east of the Hudson. The poor whites of North Carolina sometimes work a single ox harnessed into a cart. At Racine, on Lake Michigan, I once saw the Bohemians drawing their produce to market with cows yoked together like oxen. In New York, a bit of New England management may occasionally be seen cropping out in the shape of a farmer doing business with oxen. But after all, your real ox-teamster is a Yankee.

A Yankee farmer gets some lessons in æsthetics while carefully selecting and matching oxen. The other day a yoke of these well-matched creatures came tramping through my lawn and over the flower-beds; and I was not at all angry at them, they were so handsome, and took their liberty so gracefully, just as handsome people do. I often meet a farmer walking opposite the shoulders of a briskly stepping pair of red cattle, whose long and tapering white horns, tipped with brass balls, curve gracefully upward and outward like the sides of a classic vase, and I stop as often to observe the pageantry.

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The tact of an experienced ox-teamster is certainly no small thing. By means of a few movements of his whip, and by a word or two, he holds his team by a thread as subtile as that between the magnetizer and subject. It is easy to find a boy who will at once learn to drive a horse; but in order to make a first-rate ox-teamster, a boy should have something superior about him. A skilled teamster, if needs be, knows how to join two carts into a sort of wagon; he knows how to make his oxen help him load the great logs upon his sled in winter; and in twenty ways he learns how to make his skill compensate for the slowness of his team.

The Yankees brag a good deal about one thing and another: they brag of their schoolhouses, they brag because they write the books, and because they start the reforms; they brag of an ancestral piety, they brag of their enterprise, and they brag because they know how to do the best thing every time. But when I see them making use of oxen to carry on important manufacturing enterprises, I say, "Why will you brag so?" Still I sup-

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pose the teamster's brain is going all the faster when he strides on ahead, and circling his whip round and round with a slow grace, awaits the lazy pace of his team. And after all, that enterprise is the best which is always so beforehand with events that it can make use of the most leisurely and slow-going agents.

The Yankee who does business with oxen, is your truest man of New England; it is he who rests at the bottom of its stability and prosperity. He is, I conclude, more local and less cosmopolitan in his tastes and attachments, than any other man in his neighborhood. I am a Vermonter, and I was born in Hampshire Corner, a place well known to its inhabitants. Of the farmers who lived there when I was born, a part used horses, and the rest had oxen. The horse-men have all floated away from there to find new homes and live by new creeds, while those ox-teamsters were at last accounts still holding on to the old place, and taking life pretty much as they found it. But don't let me be charged with calling ox-teamsters unprogressive, for I have not said it.

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XII.

I DON'T meet a great many men when I walk in the roadside paths. One naturally expects the contrary. It is true I see the over-fed rich man and the over-fed vagabond; the active business man, and the well-to-do farmer, who feel able to have their own teams; I also meet the mechanic and some other men, who drive hired horses because they are too poor to be seen going afoot. Altogether there is not more than a score of representative men whom I know. I became tired a long time ago of traveling by rail, for I found that the same man and woman did about all the riding. When the soldier first began riding on the cars, I enjoyed the railroad again. I like to meet a new man; for this reason I am on the alert to extend my acquaintance. Some years ago I lay in wait near the Neuse river

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in North Carolina for new men and women. One of the most notable persons I found was

A PINEY-WOODS WOMAN ON THE MARCH.

She is in some sense a well-known person, having more than once made her appearance on the pages of an author. It is for this reason I wish to speak of her somewhat exactly as I saw her on that day when she emerged from the unknown, endured my eye-shot for a moment, and then passed on again into the unknown.

She was tall, lean and sallow; her dress was made of some dingy cotton stuff; on her head she wore a sun-bonnet without starch; on her shoulder she bore the gun always so ready to bring aid to the slave-owner; she was barefooted, and when she walked she did it manfully, her heels lifting her scanty skirt behind and her knees making vigorous thrusts against it before. She was preceded by two dogs and followed by a horse and cart which carried her husband — a little sallow man, who looked a good deal frozen-and-thawed by the

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fever-and-ague—two or three children, a chest, a few rude chairs, some slight tokens of bedding, and a few cooking utensils; altogether she had a smaller load of goods than a family thinks necessary when it spends a night at the sea-shore. The horse was in as good condition as a small measure of fodder and a few ears of corn could keep him. The harness was made entirely of ropes, with the exception of the back-pad and collar, which were made of wood. The cart, with the exception of the wheels, was such a thing as men make when they fashion their materials from first to last with no other tools but an ax, a hammer and an auger.

The planter who stood there with me, looked at that woman and her family with such scorn as the chivalry are wont to regard those poor whites; but I gave her the attention which is not wholly sympathy, and took note of her and all she had. Although I have spoken of the woman with such minuteness, I do not wish to be suspected of intimating that she was not a civilized person. Other men who have paraded her in litera-

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ture, have done enough of that sort of hinting. I will admit that she did not seem to wholly understand the art of getting a living. I think we Yankees have bragged a little too much because we are so comfortable, and know so well how to get a living. I have seen people who might be called perfect in the trade of foraging, but I don't know as I could call them civilized. I think people talk a good deal as if progress in civilization meant but little more than the moving out of a hut into a palace, or the substitution of a silver fork for a steel one. I have great respect for the business of getting a living. The way in which some people carry it on is almost sublime; it involves so much carpentry and upholstery, so many servants, so great resources, and a commerce so wide-spread.

But I meet some folks who don't seem to understand much else, and I find it hard to talk with them, their knowledge and mine are so dissimilar. If it is necessary I will fight the wolf at the door, and I will give my whole thought to getting much food and rai-

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ment; but if I succeed in doing no more than that, I won't brag about my civilization. Though I am a tramp, and though I wear a shaggy coat, and carry all my goods in my knapsack, still if I have beaten the savage in me, and can join my fellows in a loving and unselfish coöperation, I am a more civilized man than is he who has only achieved the ability to eat with his own silver fork. Nevertheless I imagine that the truest civilization will include a silver fork for me and mine.

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XIII.

ON whatever road I walk, I always find men; and I detect signs of them far beyond the places I ever reach; in short, I find men everywhere. I know of only one writer besides myself, who appears to have ever noticed this fact. I see men living in houses which look out on meadows watered by brooks; again I see them dwelling in back places a good deal surrounded by old grown-up pastures; I discover them along the foot of the mountains, where the days are clipped a little by the great shadows. Men can be found driving oxen along the wood-roads that lead up the sides of Mt. Beseck. I find them milking cows, going a-field and grooming animals. I often observe them in their doors, sitting there as comfortably, perhaps, as the woodchuck at his hole. There does not appear to

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be any place so barren, or any crevice among the hills so narrow as to prevent some man from occupying it, and there attempting in some way to cipher through his book of problems, perhaps like a poor scholar wholly skipping the hard ones.

People who come at their conclusions a little prematurely, are apt to feel that there are too many men. Such folks think that nature need not have so many reïterations of the same idea. By looking a little closely into the matter, I find that nature never repeats. Every man has a flavor of originality about him, that fully excuses him for being here. This man who lives in a back neighborhood, may be farming in the old rut just like his neighbors, but before I get away from him I find that he is raising dogs of a breed somewhat rare. That other man has a curious squash in his garden, the seed of which was brought from the indefinite somewhere. The sight of that squash incites me to rush out of my small sphere into the great circle of things to make discoveries. A man is pretty sure to get some original-

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ity from the patch of earth he occupies. The one who lives on Wallingford plain tells me how to reclaim the nakedest piece of drifting sand, by planting it with the acorns of yellow oak.

I like to go among the men who live in obscure places; men who dress rustily and don't lead the life of towns; who speak a language of their own, and who are unfashioned by high schools and dictionaries. These men have a flavor about them like chokecherries and wild-apples. But I am not so curious about these men's names as I am about the names of unfamiliar oaks, for the names of men are not scientific. Such men often talk to me of having been in towns and far-off places, but I do not readily associate them with cities, nor are they any more cosmopolitan to me, than are the trees that grow on their farms.

I am much impressed with the beauty of the men who live in by-places, and on the frontiers. Theirs is not the beauty which looks well in towns and in a fine house, but it is a neutral-tinted sort which exactly har-

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monizes with the woods and fields. I find these men living in houses which do not need a landscape gardener to marry them to nature. These houses are without art, yet they have something which art is glad to borrow. I have traveled in the new States and have seen the costly dwellings of the rich and prosperous. I have seen the unpretending log-house with its back ground of forest. But my imagination was set more warmly aglow by the cabins; they had such a oneness with their surroundings. The nest of a blue-jay which he builds of twigs in a cluster of saplings, springing up from a small stump, scarcely has a more complete harmony with nature than some of the houses which are built by the backwoodsmen and people who have hardly dreamed of art.

Men everywhere appear intent on bettering their condition, and I think they succeed to some extent in their attempts, for I frequently see them moving into larger and more gaily painted houses. Nevertheless, if one only gets near enough to men he will be pretty sure to hear them grumble about the difficulty of getting a living. To think of a wood-

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chuck complaining of the scarcity of bean-fields, or of his distance from a clover-lot, or because he has no time to sit on the heap of earth at the mouth of his hole! I often hear him growl, but I don't think he means to say he finds it hard work to get a living. If men would first attend to some of their higher needs, they would be excusable though they were a little shiftless in the business of getting a living; at least, they might go about their work a little more gaily than many now do.

The men whom I find in the spaces around me, are ready enough to talk of the infinite and of their relations to it. On certain days I often see people going to some town to hear something about the infinite mystery which envelops us, and to do something about the great fear and longing that fills them. Nearly every man, I notice, has come at some formula by which he is attempting to make life and the universe intelligible to himself, and he is apt to look suspiciously at his neighbor's formula. If I enunciate my creed to a man he will either feel slightly angered, or he will look confused with the idea that

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there can possibly be any other creed but his own. There are men who tell me that I am dealing with the unknowable when I attempt to span and express the infinite mystery which is concerned in what we call religion. Perhaps we don't know, and perhaps we can't know; I imagine a child does not know its mother very well, but I am certain it comprehends her paps and feels her arms. If I can only come at the breasts of the universe and feel the arms of the All-supporting, I will be content with a very small creed, for I know I shall be cured of my anguish and get my hunger appeased.

Wherever I find a man I generally find a woman too. "It is," as the vagabond said, "a man and woman everywhere." I see a little spindle-legged and flaccid man, dwelling with a deep-breasted woman who furnishes energy for both; and I think that nature takes care to have some of the manly qualities in every house. I sometimes go in swimming with one of these husbands, and I feel that I am in a delicate situation, as if he were a woman. With the man I often see the wife who no longer thinks it of use to be attrac-

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tive and so strikes her colors; I find the son who thinks his enterprise and courage are things to unbar every door and compel success; and there is the daughter who has faith in love and beauty and the coming man, and who finds means to be attractive without even intending to be so; I also see the little people who don't think much about themselves, but who do think about you. I was once traveling with a knapsack on my back, when such articles were not common. A little boy followed me, to ask many questions about myself and sack. Finally with a child-like plaintiveness he inquired, "Have you got any folks?" "Yes," said I, wishing to be thought well of, "two hundred and fifty of them!" This satisfied the youngster's anxiety about me and he went back to his mother.

A man may go among men and only look at them as he does at the trees and stones. But if a man of this habit gets near enough to the men he finds in strange fields, he will get their half-confidences and self-revealings and these will somewhat complicate his observations and fill him with surprise as if spoken to by the rocks.

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Most men hold their opinions somewhat privately and they guard them as they do the tender spots in their bodies. A man opens his mind cautiously as he does his wallet in a crowd, and if he shows his belief, he does it in the same manner in which he speaks of his loves. This man gives me his opinion as if it were a China vase, first handling it very carefully himself, and by some means learning that I will not ruthlessly smash it. That man and I have hostile beliefs. We sit together on a log in his wood-yard and whittle sticks, occasionally shoving our knife-blades into the bark of the log. He very quietly marches out his armed opinion. I lead out mine as coolly. Our two little opinions — they are world-wide opinions, however, and have fought many a time before — they look at each other for a moment, and carefully measure lances, as merchants do cloths. The one finds his weapon too short; and there is no battle; nor will there ever be one, for one of us has suffered defeat without a battle.

I think strange men are apt to make bungling work in their business of being agreeable

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to one another. I encounter men, the taste of whom puckers my mouth like a green persimmon. Men can't always find ways to be fresh to one another. I am not at all sure that my freshness will be palatable to my man, for people often behave as if the flavor of me was as insipid as an untimely melon. There are a great many men who seem as dry as chestnut-rails; yet these men have a green spot about them and some little remnant of enthusiasm. A man, I notice, rather likes to have you find out his juiciness; he may not thank you for it, but he will think you a good fellow to talk to. But discourse with all sorts of men, has its perils; if I have speech with trees and such natural things as stand by themselves, I am refreshed. Men are always more than they seem. When well inspected they prove to be so many openings into the spiritual spheres. I can't say though, as I have ever found any sons of perdition, but I do sometimes find men with whom it were better to have no contact.

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XIV.

SUNDAY is, I think, a good time for walking; I have liberty to walk then, when people have thrown down their tools and gone into a sort of collapse. But Sunday is a hard day for a lazy man; it is a poor time to sleep. I am inclined to think that a close scrutiny would reveal the fact that Sunday, as now spent, is the most pagan day in the week. It is a tiresome one for an earnest man, he is so much weighted down by a stagnation not his own. I intend to make my Sundays work for my most important interests, for I can not well afford to lose one day every week. I like to keep in with the powers which make my cabbages grow just as fast on Sunday as on any other day; so I walk as much as I like on that day. By so doing I find that I sprout a newish idea once in a while, and I don't fall behind my beets and onions.

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When I walk on Sunday I have the country pretty much to myself, for the people are mostly dozing at home or nodding in the churches. Still I find a great many boys in some places. I can't say that I like to meet them on this day. I have been a pedagogue, and I once had the benefit of Sunday schools; I think these things have fashioned me a little, for I feel a great aversion to having boys left around on Sunday, or on any other day. Indeed I find it is not easy for a man to look at things except through the special goggles of some particular craft. In the spring I everywhere meet boys carrying and nibbling small branches of

THE BIRCH TREE.

As teacher and as one taught, I have in one way or another had an acquaintance with birch sufficient to warrant me in talking about it. The birch tree is widely disseminated, and it generally prefers a moist and cool situation. During the season of my unrest, and before I began traveling in earnest, I wandered somewhat more widely than

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is absolutely necessary for a man, but I do not remember any place that did not have some species of birch.

The white birch grows in places higher up the Alps, and farther north than any other tree. I find it growing in the naked sand on Wallingford plain, where the farmers have planted it in belts to keep the wind from blowing away their farms. If it once gets rooted in the sand, it holds on and continues to make a small yearly growth. The Finns — I have it on the authority of a learned work — drink a tea made from the leaves of the white birch. My family and I have drunk birch tea unto the bitter end; we don't drink it now.

The birches are characterized by great lightness or sprightliness. To be sure the wood is not light, nor is the timber of the black birch lightly esteemed by cabinet-makers. The yellow birch, when standing on the edge of a forest, has a peculiarly light and graceful effect. Its long and slender limbs, bearing a thin foliage, appear to float upon the atmosphere as airily as a lily-pad

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upon the water. This birch seems endowed with an instinct to perch on the high places like a bird. On the top of the Green Mountains it is almost the only deciduous tree, growing there with the black spruce and fir. I have often seen a birch tree standing on a large bowlder, where it stretched its long roots down to the soil at the foot of the rock, and clasped the stone as with a claw. It may frequently be seen growing in the earth among the roots of an upturned tree. I once saw a birch that had taken root on the tall stump of a tree that had been broken off by the wind. The lightest sort of boats are made from the bark of the canoe-birch. The small limbs of this tree are a good deal used by country teachers in order to make heavy youths step a little more lightly along the course of science. In places where the chinquapin, or dwarf-chestnut, grows, it takes the place of birch in the schools. Notwithstanding its bad associations, the birch is still in good odor with the boys, and in the spring-time they always gnaw away at its aromatic bark with great avidity.

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Our summer is the torrid zone of the year, and like the equatorial regions of the earth it lies a good deal unexplored. I notice that people don't walk so much in the summer as at other seasons. To be sure we make long journeys to the pitchers of ice-water, and very long ones to the rivers and ponds, and we travel a-field and toil and sweat there the whole of the great yellow summer days; but after all we don't see much in the hot weather except ourselves, we are so occupied in cooling and comforting our own flesh. Should our New England summer be twice as long as now, I sometimes think we should not have any great amount of industry, ingenuity and sturdy virtue left us to brag of. Situated as we are, the fire which burns in us, now impels our inventive intellect and carries us through self-denying labors and over round-about roads, to enjoyment; in hotter zones our vital flame would only serve to keep the passions at the boiling point. Northern virtue taken to the tropics, might behave as curiously as the polar bears I see in cages, trying

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to cool themselves with a moderate amount of ice-water, and it might found some new institutions. I know of a northern man who once lived in one of the Southern States. His sturdy virtue held out during all the cooler months, and he persisted in being his own servant; but in June he became willing to be waited on, and he began to think that a slave was a good thing to have in a hot country.

I find people who don't like to think that their virtues and intellect are nothing but the natural products of the place they live in; like apples, for example, which are produced only in the temperate zone, or like the bread-fruit which grows no where but in the tropics. If we look at man as only a sort of higher animal, it must be admitted that the facts are a good deal in favor of those who would make it appear that men are the creatures of climate. At present the best men are found in the cool places. Nevertheless, Christianity proposes to introduce a new element into the question. It was in warmer places than we inhabit where men first received the gospel

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and first struggled for a victory over the flesh. It may be that the tropics will yet give the best fruits of the spirit and intellect.

A man gets through the summer feeling much like one who has gone over a rich field, and gleaned too little. He resolves in future to be a more diligent observer. Autumn, therefore, is like the temperate zone, the most thoroughly explored spot in the year. I, too, am inclined to multiply and lengthen my walks, and I see a great many new walkers abroad. Pedestrians coming from far-off nurseries, encounter me. They carry books filled with pictures of all fruits; I look at the fine show and feel guilty for having doubted that the world will yet become a paradise. These men offer to comfort me with apples; they offer me grapes of Eshcol; they will sell me the vine that bears such a grape "as grows by the beautiful river;" and in short, they offer to fill my garden with all the fruits of Eden. These Mercuries, going about on errands for Pomona, frequently leave me

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A CATALOGUE FOR THE FALL TRADE.

Crickets chirping in the grass,
Locusts z-inging in the trees,
Smell of apples on the breeze,
Begin the Autumn.

Clustered grapes o'erhanging rivers,
Gold-rods nodding in the pastures,
Poke-weeds flaunting out, and asters,
Make our Autumn.

Bursting barns o'er filled with sheaves,
Shorter days and wetter eves,
Crimson, yellow, scarlet leaves,
These in Autumn.

A growing coolness in the air,
A stillness reigning everywhere,
My book and lamp and easy chair,
These are Autumn.

Past and gone the summer's madness,
Pulsing, swelling, bounding gladness,
Mixed with pathos, sweetest sadness,
This is Autumn.

Denser brains and deeper hearts,
Stronger legs and quicker hands,
Higher prayers and wiser thoughts,
Come in Autumn.

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XV.

IF I do go among things to look at them, it does not follow that I have not believed in the reality of any thing except matter. I like to look at things a good deal; it is healthful for me. Often the first hint I get that all is not going well with me, is that the trees and pastures and my dinner, don't seem quite right; they all appear a little unreal. The things at which I look so much, are, I conclude, only the complement of things gaseous, airy, ghostly, spiritual and invisible. It will be found that these terms once meant just about the same thing. In order to have any profit from walking, I find it necessary to look at the universe as composed of a body and soul, just as I think of myself as divided into body and me. With a good, solid apprehension of God as the soul of all things, for a vantage ground, a man can safely give a

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large part of his attention to observation, knowing all the while that he is dealing with the less important things. In fact, a man without an abiding sense of God, can be considerably troubled with unbelief in matter itself, and he will be compelled to struggle some to maintain a sense of its reality. The senses can't always make me absolutely certain of outward things.

I strike my hand against the earth to prove
It real, and I only find it hard.

I am at present a walker and looker, and I like to go among things to see the universe in all its variety and multiplicity, and feel the mystery and unknowable which envelop me. I am not always seeking after unities. Why should a man be in a hurry to roll all things together into a little pellet which he can eat at one mouthful? The forest has yielded me timber enough for my house; I shall, therefore, feel under no obligation to explore the wilderness except at my leisure. The mysterious and the unknown are the thinker's raw material: why should he be in haste to work up the whole of it at once? It is

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enough for me to know that all things are bound together, even if I do not see all the strings and knots that bind the package. Still I want to make sure that I am well tied in with the great bundle of things, and that I shall not be lost out any where. But after all, when my neighbor's hens ravage my grapes, and when my party gets beaten — I am a party man, and I am always sure that all the truth is on one side, and that is mine — I want to go up to some man and say, "Be so kind, Sir, as to tell me in just two words, what is the meaning of all this agglomeration of things which we call the universe."

If I am a looker, I am something of a seer too. I find that I can not touch anything without getting wider knowledges, and glimpses of more comprehensive unities. If I employ myself in copying oak leaves, they give me a hint which would, I am sure, if well followed up, do much to reveal the thought that underlies all things. I have seen some of the unities, though I have demonstrated none of them. A man can go about

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and look at the earth in something of the same way in which a louse looks at the animal on which it is crawling. I have looked at things as if each had a life of its own. But some time ago nature revealed herself to me, and I was made to look at things a little more comprehensively. I will therefore speak of the occurrence with some minuteness of circumstance.

I was sitting near the edge of Paug Pond, on a slope of broken stones which had tumbled down from the heights above. Pepper-root, adder's-tongue, and blood-root were sprouting among the rocks about me. Flocks of noisy grackles were flying around overhead. At the foot of the slope sat a fisherman engaged in dressing his trout. I watched him at his work. He held the fish in his left hand, and with a single stroke of his knife he ripped up their silver bellies, then with a quick thrust with his thumb he removed the entrails, throwing them into the water with a flirt. The pond was rippling with a movement more rhythmical and pleasing than that which I generally find when reading prose or

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poetry. On the other edge of the pond was the dark shore-line winding along under the trees, and I saw the image of the overhanging hill reflected in the water.

Noting all these I was startled suddenly as by a shock, and I saw that all things are pervaded by a single life: in short, during half a breath, I saw the earth as one living creature. I was filled with awe. What I saw I can never tell; it may have been like the glimpse we get of a wild animal when he darts into a thicket; it may have been like a faint step, and a rustle of silk on the corridor; or, it may have been like a white and jeweled hand thrust from the window of a strange house to draw in the shutter. I felt as if nature had shown herself in order to rebuke me for staring at her so grossly. I was humiliated, I took to the road, feeling that I must thereafter be more devout in the presence of nature than I had ever been.

If things are going well with a man, he may walk a good deal for the pleasure of it, for profit enough will be sure to follow him. Indeed, it is not easy to conceive of a man

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walking. very much when the act is a drag on him. But tramping about the country for the mere pleasure of it, is perilous enough. I have found that a man can't walk much without coming face to face with the sternest question of his life: "Will you walk only when you are sent?" is the question.

I have concluded that all my desires are capable of being reduced to two: one is a desire to have pleasure and be happy, the other is a desire to find my place and do what is wanted of me. The first centers me on myself: the second takes me out of myself and makes me refer to God for guidance. The struggle between these two desires for precedence, is what makes your life a battle. People who have little or no desire except for their own pleasure, are quite likely to look on the great whole as arranged for giving them enjoyment; but when they miss happiness, they look on the universe as a failure, and are ready to jump into the sea. We all started in life with the desire for happiness altogether the most active and conspicuous. It is none of your business, says a

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modern essayist, whether you are happy or not. But it appears to me that these two desires make a partnership, in which obedience is the controlling member. Christ appears to have blended the two, for he says, "My meat and drink"—my pleasure,—"is to do the will of him who sent me." When these two desires are truly married, I imagine that pleasing and being pleased will become a more conspicuous part of life. Till then a man must needs ask for liberty to walk.

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XVI.

MY neighbor Ravenstone says I talk too much. I am aware that I do some talking just now, but then I am a better listener than he is, at any time. We are told that it is more blessed to give than to receive; but if you don't listen, how can you ever bless a man by letting him give his words to you? I therefore listen all I can when I am walking about. One of my critics tells me that I am always contenting myself with the lesser blessings. I know that I am a little backward, but I am trying to familiarize myself with the idea that the best of all things may be intended for me too. By listening attentively I can generally hear something that is

ADDRESSED TO ME.

It is a February morning, and milky white with a dense fog. I plunge into the sea of

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vapor and walk to a remote place to do some pruning for the business man who gives me work. The fog shuts out all sense of neighborhood, and I can see but little except the peach-tree which I am pruning; so I stop cutting off the red and yellow shoots, and seat myself on a cobble, to welcome the best thing that may be coming to me.

The surrounding spaces seem like a vast sea of sounds and voices; I therefore surrender myself to my ears. Everything living appears to be trying to assert its neighborhood to me, and I am, if possible, more in society in this solitary peach-orchard, than if I were in a parlor. From the camps across the valley comes a bugle-call, and the drummer's steady "rub-a-dub, dub-a-dub, dub, dub." In one direction I hear the gobble of a turkey, in another the gabble of geese, in a third I hear the crowing of a cock; and then comes the ringing sound of a hammer driving a nail into a board. These domestic sounds introduce to me the solitary men who dwell in farm-houses surrounded by wife and children, by horses and cattle, and sheep, and swine,

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by cats and dogs, and poultry. A blue-jay is in the woods, and his scream sparkles out like a musical scintillation. The note of a jay brings much to me. He lives with us all the year; but he has a habit of keeping long silences. After you have forgotten him he will come screaming about the orchards, or he will show himself to you in some out-of-the-way place, and bring you the whole year —spring flowers, smell of pine and odor of birch, golden-rods and scarlet leaves, snow-flakes and summer heat. A nut-hatch is making his small measure of noise. I like him, for he is one of the birds that sing with their backs to the audience, not caring for the applause. The crows are cawing around me, but they know perfectly well who is listening to them. When one of these wary birds flies nearer than usual and caws at me, he impresses me almost magnetically by his personality. He is full of his own self, if he does belong to a flock. And overflowing with audacity, a hawk is screaming above the trees. He is piercing the silence with his steely voice, like a robber searching with

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dagger thrusts through curtains and tapestries.

In addition to all these unmistakable sounds there was the noise of a "drop-press" in some manufactory. The nearest shop in the direction whence the sound appears to come, is at Yalesville, two miles distant. This sound was just the faintest amount of jar and crash, and it could be distinguished only by a special effort. Besides all the sounds which I could hear distinctly, there seemed to be a delicate wave or murmuring sound which came from unknown sources, and harmonized all the other sounds. The noise of the drop—hardly more than the intimation of a sound—appeared to be the boundary line between the definite and the indefinite sounds. It had something of the character of both; and it served to prove the existence of a faint wave of blended sounds rolling in from far-off concussions of the air.

All at once through this refined element of sound which I was studying, and which filled the air like a mist, there suddenly came the screech and roar of the noon-express rushing like a tornado and making an end of all my fine hearing.

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XVII.

IN order for a man to be a great walker it is necessary, I sometimes imagine, that he should be rather homely. Indeed, I know that the great workers are a little uncomely: nature sacrifices some of her best lines that she may put a little more work into a man; she gives him a bony wrist, a great hand and a large foot. The people who tell me of the feats which they have performed on foot, are not generally handsome men; they are of the same sort as the hard workers. In my walks I see a great many fine-looking men, who are either riding or driving, or in one way and another keeping company with horses. These men have small hands and feet; nature consulted with beauty when she fashioned these cavaliers. I sometimes stop to observe one of these elegant figures, as he stands holding the reins of his horse; I notice how his arm

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tapers down to a plump strong wrist and small hand, and I wonder how it is that these easy-moving men will always ride; they could add so much luster to a foot-path. But then, I suppose they are too handsome to go afoot. Once in a while I see a genuine horseman on foot; he generally appears a little out of place, and looks as if he were in search of a horse to make up for some conscious deficiency in himself. I have observed the centaurs somewhat, and I have found that their hair is not always the finest, and that their flesh is not the most ethereal. In fact, I don't think the finest grained men are much given to horse fellowship. Still, these showy men, whose hearts go out in a perfect gush towards their horses, do much to enliven the roads, and I like to see them driving their proud animals in the dusty highways, while I tramp along the by-paths to avoid the smell of harness-leather and keep out of the

DIRT.

I once enlisted to serve in the great war against filth. For two years I fought dirt

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and disorder; I not only struggled against my own dirt, but I struggled with the dirt of other people. I followed it into corners, I drew it forth from holes, I seized upon it in open places, I burnt it, and I put it under bonds to keep the peace. During those two years I saw the universe under new aspects; I found new categories for men and things. All things are either dirt or not dirt. All people are naturally divided into the following classes; First, those who take care of their own dirt; second, those who do not take care of their own dirt; third and last, those who take care of other folks' dirt.

For present purposes, dirt may be defined as chaotic and offensive matter—material in a floating, intermediary state—matter which is out of place and is antagonistic to other things. Dirt when gathered together and held in subjection, ceases to be dirt; it then has a right to exist. It would take some talk to make my neighbor Hokum think of his compost-heaps as filth. To him they are good honest matter undergoing some important chemical changes. He stands among his heaps and talks of his labors with all the

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dignity of a chemist in his laboratory. I respect him, for he is a man governed by science rather than by sense. Bouquets at which beauty has sniffed, glossy curls which have adorned the heads of fair women, skins of radiant fruits, scraps of love-letters, bits of paper on which are printed poems, leaves that have fluttered on the trees all summer, and in brief, every good thing when separated from its proper connections, becomes filth as soon as it falls upon my lawn. Half angered I seize upon the nuisance and bear it off to where it will not offend.

All the powers seem to be calling for more dirt; and they get it. The snakes slough their skins. Tidy people clip their hair and pare their nails. Wherever a man makes anything, or uses anything, there he leaves a heap of chips. I have great trouble with my brass door-plate, it has such a constant liability to become dim with rust. The girl tells me it is getting much worn by her constant scourings. The Roman of to-day, we are told, is walking in streets thirty feet higher than those in which Romulus first

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traveled. Rome has struggled to rise high enough to sit upon her own pile of dirt. I notice the universal tendency of things to go back towards dust. The tooth of frost, the claw of the lichen, the buff and rebuff of wind and rain and hail and snow, at once lay our fairest works under contribution to swell the great aggregate of dirt. Cheeks which glow, eyes that seem celestial, forms which walk in a halo of power and beauty, must, unless some stay can be found, go to supply the insatiable demand for more dirt.

Passing through an intermediate stage of dirt, all matter seems to be in a perpetual flux, first appearing in one form, then in another. The earth is like the mosses in a peat-swamp; decay at one end and growth at the other. But I notice that men don't like to give themselves up to this law of change. He who can longest resist change and keep his work or name from decay and dust, is called greatest. Resistance to the tendency of everything to go to pieces, is one of the things which makes my life a perpetual fight.

I walk about among simple people, and I

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see women bending over wash-tubs; I see them stooping over pails to wring their mops; indeed, I am everywhere reminded of the great contest with dirt. This battle goes on daily, hourly, instantly and always. Every man and every woman is enlisted for the war; even the vagabonds are not exempted; in their shiftless fashion, they too are trying to keep a little cleaner. I am much impressed by the vast army of people who are exclusively engaged in this war: soap- and brush-makers; the manufacturers of brooms, and mops, and combs; barbers, scavengers, gutter-men and sewer-makers, and washer-women. Where the dirty Mohawks once lived, I see much land devoted to the raising of broom-corn, and I conclude that the world is really getting forward slowly. I find many signs to make me believe that the war with dirt is progressing favorably. The Shakers appear to have nearly annihilated their dirt; I think, considering the notions they have respecting some very pure things, their cleanliness is somewhat remarkable.

When I have walked in towns and seen the

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neatness of the best streets, I have wondered how it is that the millennium has not yet come. But when I go into the poor man's quarter of the city, I imagine that the clean spots of the earth are made by piling up the dirt more thickly in other places. I decided some time ago that a broom and mop won't make the millennium; however, I don't know that they will be out of place even there. I have sometimes looked in at the door of houses on back roads and seen the order of some rustic woman; the sight of her neatness has affected me like a promise of better things for this world.

I have seen people go into the battle against dirt with a grim earnestness that made their lives tragic. With such people uncleanliness is unrighteousness; and a dirty place is a hell. They are constantly troubled with dirt in the eye. To them the fields and woods are intolerable until scratched with a rake and swept with a broom. It is best to fight smilingly, and not be too earnest. Too much earnestness is inconvenient, when it puts one at loggerheads with the universe

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Dirt is a stream—an incident in the metamorphosis of matter; we can't destroy it, but we can control it and get the good of it.

In order to maintain the practical value of my writing, I will now give some directions for conducting a campaign against dirt. The struggle is at best, merely defensive. Dirt attracts dirt; a single spot of it, if tolerated, utters a rallying-cry to all manner of filth. The first atom of invading rubbish should therefore be attacked at once by broom or rake and be carried off to the flames, or be held in check where it will find most speedy decay and re-birth into new forms of beauty.

Lovers, I notice, are haters of dirt. People in love enter into the fight with new ardor: they put on clean clothes. More than one literary man has made this circumstance the occasion for a little pleasant thrusting at lovers. I have seen some very good people who never made themselves entirely free from the taint of dirt. I have heard them speak as if they were in love, yet I thought they were mistaken, for I did not see them striving for greater personal purity.

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When I have walked much in towns, and mingled with men who are mostly concerned with matter, my friends have sniffed at me as if I were foul, and they would not be content until they had given me a moral scrubbing. I meet men who are faultless in respect to their linen; they are shaven and shorn by artists; nevertheless, they are oozy and dripping with a life that impresses me like dirt. Their words are like things fished up from the gutter, and their thoughts smell of putrefaction. Hot bath, cold bath, Turkish bath, can not cleanse them. Nothing but a soaping with the most alkaline criticism, and a moral rubbing, as with hempen towels, can reach their dirt.

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XVIII.

THE vagabonds all tell me that they are traveling either to Tyre or Sidon. Guided by the telegraph poles these walkers hobble along the great highways which connect the large towns. They leave the filth of one city and make painful pilgrimages to find the dirt of another.

It is an easy thing to walk toward the city: the roads all seem to lead in that direction. I encounter many people who are going to the towns to spend their leisure, and they appear to think they are doing a great thing. If I inquire my way to the pond, or to the sea, or to place-no-place, men give little starts of surprise, as if I were out of the regular lines of travel in more ways than one, and they are not satisfied until they have subjected me to the inquisi-

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tion. The city itself is swelling with the idea that it is more worthy than the country. When I walk in the town I see men sitting in the public places, and holding stumps of cigars in their mouths. They look at me as if they thought the city had in some way conferred royalty upon them. But I know that the dirt of the street is in their eyes, and that the fume of the gutter has reached their heads.

I think I understand what the cities are good for. They keep the surplus of sugar and shoes and cloth, until we country people want more of those articles. When my grape-vines yield more fruit than I can use, the city stands ready to find some one to eat the rest for me. The towns always serve as landmarks to guide a man when he is walking on the unfamiliar roads which lead through meadows and bush pastures. I myself know something about the fascination of the town. When I have approached the city I have felt its delirium stealing into my brain, and I have been invited to gobble pleasure as greedily as a pig feeding on sour milk. I

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have witnessed the brilliancy of the city, and I have listened to the music made by the voices of its great industries. I have sat upon the deck of a wood sloop and heard the sounds that came from the docks: the rattling of the trucks trundling freight on board a steamer; the creaking of the pulleys when a sail is hoisted; the noise of the stevedores unloading the coalers; the slamming of boards in a lumber-yard; the quick rattle of a sail as it slides down the mast.

Having looked into matters, I have concluded that a man hoeing turnips in the country, is the person who works amid the splendors. He is the man whom all should go to see if they wish to find one who has the most superb surroundings. I am now picking my grapes; my cow is feeding down in the old pasture where the mint and sweet-fern grow, where the oak is dropping its acorns, and where the chestnut-trees are scattering their burrs. A maple has cast a red reflection in the pond where the lilies grow. If I will but step aside I can see the great show of golden-rods in my neighbor's

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pasture. Near the gate, by the road, is my poke-weed; it has done well this year, and its purple stalks now support long racemes of pink, and white, and green flowers, and dark purple berries. It is a regal herb. I am surrounded by splendor to-day and have no need of going to the city to look after the glitter of frescoes, plate-glass and facades.

The roads all lead to the city; so it is not strange that the vagabonds and people without a purpose, should yield to the tide which sets toward the town. But I don't think it is good to go the same way with the tramps; a man had better go the other way and walk in the

BACK NEIGHBORHOODS.

On the tops of the hills between the great thoroughfares, and a little aside from the main wagon roads, where railways and telegraph lines will never go, I sometimes find neighborhoods which may be called the lean spots of Connecticut. These are not the gathering places of enterprise. Enterprise in this State, like the soil, has a decided tendency

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to work down into the valleys. Life don't gather in these back places; it radiates from them and goes to swell the life of those rapid-growing towns about which we like to brag when in the hearing of Englishmen. Men live in these out of the way corners, but go elsewhere to get work. These are the spots where men and women are the staple productions. I have known of the world sending to one of these corners to get a brain-worker.

The roads in these back neighborhoods are like striped ribbons — three stripes of earth and two of grass — and they go winding along between the stone walls, and under the outstretched arms of wayside oaks, and among red cedars that once in the year are all ablaze with the scarlet leaves of the Virginia-creeper. These roads have been made by the man who drives a sober horse harnessed to a plain wagon, and who jolts along to church with his wife, or to the mill with a bag of corn. With the exception of the people who live on them, these roads are not much traveled except by the men who go into by-

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places to find hired girls, and purchase young cattle, and by myself who go there to get some of the things which otherwise might run to waste.

Connecticut is so full of ingenuity and invention, I am constrained to walk in the back neighborhoods to see some of its quaint old industries. Within hearing of the cars, I sometimes find the hand-loom and the old spinning-wheels. I see wooden-toothed harrows tilted up against the walls. I notice men pursuing some rather primitive modes to fill their small barns. Leaving out of account the main staples — the men and women — these small barns hint at light crops. However, there is always another harvest of whortleberries, blackberries, chestnuts and hickory-nuts and poetry. The crop of poetry which I find in the old fields is not small. But I don't think much of it is ever harvested. The most of it is either plowed in or suffered to rot down like rowen. I sometimes harvest a little of it for my own convenience. Indeed, it would be well for every man to gather some of it, but then I would not have him

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think he must rush into market with it. When I try to talk with men I sometimes notice that they are a little deaf; I infer from this that nine-tenths of the good things which I get, are given me expressly for my own consumption. So when I say crop of poetry, I don't mean verse; verse is what we get when the purple cluster is mashed and its juice is sealed up in regular measures with great dimples in their bottoms. Taken all together, the crop in these retired places is somewhat immense I think.

I like to walk among the people in back places, where the folks wear their clothes to keep themselves warm, and not to make a show on the street. These people have none of the town's polite insolence; they look at me with a sort of brotherhood in their eyes. But I do not go among men to praise them all. I have seen the weight of depravity which everywhere weighs down upon man; and I should be a poor reporter, indeed, if I did not tell once for all how well I know that every man stands in need of divine help. I see men on our country roads, who have

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been much abroad; they are covered with moral travel-stains and they have the hard finish which men get in the great towns. When I contrast these men with our simple farmers, I am ready to shell the city with hard words.

I also observe a great many deep-chested women in the back places. To-day I saw a bare-headed and bare-armed woman engaged in feeding and counting her turkeys; with one red arm she held her feeding-dish against her stout waist, and with the other she pointed out the fowls as she counted. The sight of that woman re-assured me that the vigor of the race is not much impaired.

These back neighborhoods are good places; for in them you have a chance to escape from the tyranny of society, which compels a man to wear a gold ring on his little finger and put a carpet on his floor, and which makes him feel a little ashamed if he can't live like my neighbor Dives. I am engaged just now in scrutinizing the sumptuary requirements of society. I have helped take up a carpet or two, and it has occurred to me that they were

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put down to conceal the fact that I have been living on a mass of filth and barbarism, which my neighbor Hokum would not tolerate an instant on his barn floor. However, I find myself somewhat emancipated from ordinary society; were it otherwise, I would go to some by-place where I could draw nigh to God and nourish myself on the fatness of an old pasture.

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XIX.

IF a man takes to the road to look after the golden-rods, not knowing nor caring much where he shall go, he will be pretty sure to miss the profit of his expedition. My walks are definite jobs and I know when I have finished one of them. If you aim at some particular spot in the spaces around you, it will keep you from making too much leeway. It exasperates me to hear people talk about rambling; the word is unsavory. Let weak-minded persons ramble, and maunder as they go. Some folks are much given to lounging at home because they can't see any big thing towards which to travel. After a somewhat careful measurement, I have concluded that the small things are the greatest. I have fed on sublimity ever since I made that discovery. If I take a long tramp to get the acorns of the pin-oak,

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I not only find the nuts, but I get something else besides. Nature invites us to a little lunch, but she seats us at a table which glitters with crystal and which is warm with ruby wines.

Country villages are conspicuous things, and in the lack of anything better, they will serve to set bounds to a jaunt on foot. A town always offers something to an observer. The people of a village often have a succulence and showiness which surpasses what I see among country folk, just as the asters and salvias in my garden outflaunt the fringed gentians and wild-asters. The crop of men in a village is somewhat large; and I go there when I want to see a plenty of people. I raise spinach in order to be sure of having an abundance of greens in the spring; but when I want something flavorous and tonic I go into the swamp to get cowslips and scurvy-grass, or into the fields to get dandelions.

I always know when I reach the seat of government in one of our little Connecticut democracies, for I there find the whipping-post. These posts are very convenient pieces

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of timber about which to loop the outer end of a walk. I see them standing out alone upon the village green where the cows pasture; I see them standing under the pendant limbs of old elms whose trunks are yellow with lichens; I have seen them keeping company with the liberty-pole, town-pump and stone horse-block. Some of these posts have been made by skillful carpenters, for they are fashioned like columns, and they hint at pedestal, shaft and capital. Their broadest sides are garnished with notices from town-officials, and they are well sprinkled with nail-heads and nail-holes. Small sinners are no longer scourged at the whipping-posts; but, nevertheless, these sturdy sticks of painted wood are the most pungent reminders of Puritan rigor, which I ever notice in

AN OLD TOWN.

A cleanly old colonial village full of white houses; it stands on a lap of land near the sea; on the one side are salt-water meadows veined with coves through which the tides creep backward and forward; on the other

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side meadows and hill-pastures, now green with alders, scarlet with sumac, blood-red with dog-wood, yellow and brown with hickories. The regicides, Goffe and Whalley, once skulked there; but I shall not tell its name, for I have not been hired to raise the price of its building-lots. The people are mostly farmers, and they "have retained, more than most others in the State, the ancient manners of the New England colonists." "The first planters, whether *Gentlemen* or *Yeomen*, were almost all of them husbandmen by profession," and they came from Kent. Manufactures have never thriven either in township or village; nevertheless, the old town has grown rich upon the fruits of the soil, and by the small industries which are immediately connected with agriculture; and it has many large and comfortable houses. There were "but few traders" among the first settlers; "not one blacksmith; it was with great cost the town obtained one to live among them. In this respect they were quite different from the first settlers of New Haven, although they came with them. The good people who came

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with Mr. Davenport were Londoners bred to merchandise, and fixed upon a place proper for trading, which was their design."

A traveler reaching this old town at night-fall, must go around in the twilight and seek entertainment in some one of the two hundred houses, for the place has not had a hotel for some years past. A few small and unobtrusive stores are mingled with the substantial houses which look out upon the large and neatly-fenced public square, where stand the maples and elms, town-pump and liberty-pole. The place is not without sprightly modern houses, standing on clean lawns, embellished with altheas and box and separated from the street by iron fences; but these natty dwellings are every where flanked and fronted by well-kept old houses that have quince-trees, currant-bushes and lilacs, for accessories.

The ancient houses of this old-fashioned town deserve careful mention for they are such as are peculiar to Connecticut, and they are the signs of the substantial comfort and prosperity which preceded the wealth that has flowed in from manufactures. The West

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has built no characteristic mansions; men there go at once from the log-cabin or cheap board structures, into Italian or Gothic villas and cottages; but New England, before its Puritanism became diluted and before it commenced borrowing ideas in architecture, had time to build some houses which flavor a walker's experience like old cheese. The houses in this town are large, solid, two story in front and one in the rear. The second story projects beyond the lower one, and the garret beetles over the second. Many of these houses have only five windows in front; some are varied by gambrel roofs and by wings which give an additional piquancy. The huge broad-throated stone chimneys seem as if intended to give stability to the wooden structures built around them. An old smoke-stack has known many inhabitants; at the bottom of it successive families of men, women and children, who have hovered around the fire-places, loving, hoping, cooking, fearing, praying, and gnawed with care; at the top, annual broods of swallows that have thundered and twittered there, and

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gyrated above it, and lived without care. These plain houses, built by men severely practical and unaffected, have in the end come to possess a quaint beauty like that which one gets in old-time prose. Thus in the long run, simple truth is sure to transmute itself into beauty. The modest ornaments of these houses — a bead on the great oak beam over the kitchen, and a chimney-top laid up with reëntrant angles, show what an inexpugnable love of display existed even in the soul of a Puritan.

There are many old men in this town; some at work in their back-yards; others going with baskets on their arms to the store or meat-shops. They are slight-made men, and they have that gentility which I do not remember of seeing anywhere except in New England. Our Puritan stock, depleted by the emigrations to the West, and uncrossed with the coarse vigor of the European immigrants, evidently has some tendency towards physical enfeeblement. Winthrop and Hawthorne probably did not have to go out of their native states to get the originals of "Hugh Clitheroe"

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and "Clifford Pyncheon." Elderly men tired of their farms, gather into this old town; when young, they could keep themselves warm in isolation, but now they huddle together to get a little social warmth, or to find a more ready consolation from the public offices of their religion.

In an old house which stands upon the most public corner of the green, there lives an aged and childless poet, who has crept back to his native town, from the metropolis where he found fame and friends. Years ago he sung "with voice as trumpet loud," but now he haunts the most frequented places in the village, as if he could not quite get over the habit of going where men live in throngs. I shall not name him. You who like to read poems bound in blue and gold, need not ask to see the poet; you saw him while you read his lines. If you are ever curious to see the man who writes verse, you may find that he mumbles to himself in the street; that he has a trivial round of outward activity; that he tries to warm his heart with that drink which men flavor with water and juniper-

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berries. If I have pared the peach and given you the pulp, don't come asking where I threw the rind, or where I have planted the stone.

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XX.

AT one time I was curious to know how the trees feel and of what the dumb creatures are thinking. Some of my discoveries were surprising to myself —even startling, and from which I was fain to draw back, though they were exceedingly vague in outline and intangible. I will only stop here to say that I once got at

THE VIEWS OF A WOODCHUCK.

I deem it very good luck,
That I'm only a woodchuck,
For I never have to travel,
  All the world over
On stony roads and gravel,
  To get my beans and clover.
I've no friends with axes
  To grind,
Nor a king with taxes
  To bind.

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I keep no crusts upon a shelf;
For in the winter I can nurse myself.
I shut my doors
To stop the bores
And sleep the while
To save my stores.
As for my evil
'Tis but the wheat and the weevil.
Guns, traps, and gins,
May greatly vex me;
And other sins
May all perplex me;
But I'll not care the chirp o' the sparrow
Which dips, and darts like an arrow
O'er banks of cinque-foil and yarrow.
When I'm done with my bones,
I'll give them to the stones,
That have made me a home
And go to brighter zones.
I deem it very good luck
That I'm only a woodchuck.

The rocks and trees are always ready to be looked at: the reäction from them is pleasant, and they never come into antagonism with you except by their passive resistance which compels you to walk around

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them. But when I try to look after the quails, I find that they, too, are observers: they glance at me and then with a loud *whir-r-r* they fly over the fence one after another, and skimming along the ground they alight in some field of stubble. If I ride with Mr. Hokum, these birds treat me as if I were half horse, keeping very still until I can note their colors and feel their wild beauty. I am in no haste now to smother my sense of their grace, with the coarse feeling of a sportsman. But when I go among men, I see in their eyes such means of defense and such power of attack, it is hard for me to tell which of us is the sportsman and which the game. I often feel as if I were the one that is bagged.

I was one day walking on that edge of Wallingford plain which is nearest the Quinnipiac. I had in view some yellow oaks, a rail-fence, and a small hollow, brown and red with whortleberry bushes, blackberry briars, and the creeping dewberry. Two colored men, carrying spades and woodchucks, and accompanied by their dogs, presently

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entered on the scene. The dogs coursed about, sniffing at all the holes, the men waded among the briars and waited, and I looked on with that remoteness of feeling which makes no distinction between man and nature. The dogs soon giving promise of game, the men went to work. I wanted to know how woodchucks were captured, so I joined the hunters. We briefly dropped our chins towards our breasts in token of reverence for one another. I admire horses, I pat dogs on the head; but if I come close enough to a strange man, I have an impulse to give him all the worship there is in a nod. The dogs ran around in quest of more game; the black man standing, perhaps, nearest the animals, followed up the hint given by the hounds, and conducted operations, while the mulatto did the digging. I asked questions about woodchucks' holes, the digger sought news from the great world, and the other man kept at work, sending his breath through his broad nostrils in short puffs like a snort. But we were all embarrassed, and one of us felt better when we

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were further apart; but for all that, I now feel somewhat nearer those men.

Walking among men is not quite as pleasant as tramping in the fields. I am not a bashful man — that is easy to be seen; but when I get among strange folks I feel as if I had carried my wares to the wrong market. I parade my ideas and they seem to me like the pale-yellow leaves which fall off before autumn; they appear like small wild-flowers which were pressed and dried last year. But a man's thoughts always have value in some market. My opinions have great weight out in my garden: the grape-vines are almost wholly governed by my views. People often look over my garden fence to ask me how I do things, and they listen to me almost as much as they talk to me. Once in a while I go down to the post-office; if neither the 'squire, nor the colonel, nor neighbor Dives, is there, I then give my views at large upon any subject that is uppermost. Some of them have been reported to the 'squire, and he has, I understand, undertaken to refute them.

I see men whose walk is a sort of creeping

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when they go abroad, they are so much cramped by the upper classes of society. The number of persons I meet who make a distinction between themselves and the *people* is somewhat noteworthy. I have concluded that our Christian, Puritan New England is just about the most aristocratic part of the country. The South has stood upon its negroes and its valor, while we have stood upon our spelling-books and ingenuity: but the South will have to get a dictionary now, for New England has added courage to its virtues. I once knew a Yankee teacher who went into one of the Carolinas and who thought that if the whites were worthy to be served by the blacks, he was worthy to be served by the master's folks. A young man came into my garden once to learn how I train my grape-vines. He was pale and narrow-chested, and he had a weak jaw, a downy chin, and a troubled eye. I patronized him, for I was in my own garden. By and by he said to me feebly, "Don't you think the 'Concord' is *the* grape for the *people?*" "I think it is," I replied; yet I said to myself,

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"our high schools and our picture galleries are making havoc with the Christian simplicity of our young people." I have often heard men emphasize *people* in that way, but it is not a good thing to do in the hearing of a man who is obliged to work for a living. But perhaps the young man thought that the word people comprises all the persons who don't see the difference between my "Delaware" grapes and such as grow along the river; and mayhap he did feel himself somewhat separated from the men and women who have strong muscles and square jaws, and who can work hard and do much hearty eating.

I sometimes feel a good deal cramped when I walk among the men who belong to what are called the lower classes. Educated people don't look at my knapsack and inquire if I am a peddler of essences. Very ordinary folks sometimes corner me up and retail their opinions just as if I could not appreciate anything better. After such encounters a man feels obliged to go into the fields and pick up a new impression before he can recover his self-respect. My liberty is always cur-

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tailed by the bondage of common people. Mr. Hokum's man, Krusty, works very hard because he is obliged to get a living; he has raised a family for some reason which he does not quite understand; and on Sunday he puts on a kind of severe virtue and marches off to church with his wife and two boys, because he thinks that is doing the best thing for himself and the right thing by the Lord. Now, I don't do anything as he does; but whenever he finds me walking on Mr. Hokum's farm, he has a way of making me feel that I am a shiftless man, because I don't stay at home and perpetually weed my onion-bed. Why should not I walk in the pastures sometimes, instead of looking after a job as soon as I have done the work in my garden? I have not come into a life-long bondage to labor, as Krusty has in consequence of getting married.

I often feel belittled by the superiority of lumber-men, teamsters and sailors. I have stood upon the deck of a sloop in the night and seen the captain standing like a phantom at the helm, shouting his orders to his men amid the flapping of sails, the dashing of the

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waves, and the uproar of the jib-tackle as it thrashed along the "traveler;" and I have then seen garden-craft, pen-craft, and such men and arts as thrive in parlors, dwindle when contrasted with the rugged faculty of the sailor. At such times I have been glad to sit in company with the captain at his little dancing table, and eat boiled pork and cabbage and drink coffee without milk; for I hoped I was reïnforcing my stock of hardy manhood.

I am not going to make a special plea in favor of isolation, for I notice a very strong native tendency in men to seek some sort of reïnforcement from one another. But society just now is something of an illusion; and men, I judge, are generally a little disappointed in each other. I see them shaking hands and going through with all the routine of hospitality and politeness, and I wonder how it is that they do not blush or burst out laughing in each other's faces at the farce they are enacting — so little of value passes between them, and they are so weary of one another, and so glad to be parted. We all find it easier to enact our ideals than

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to live them. At present, any swamp affords a more wholesome refreshment than one gets from a crowd of men. I was once overtaken by a stranger who invited me to ride with him. I knew he was going to ask me, for I felt my back spattered with his kind intention before it came forth in words. A man who walks in a town is spattered by all sorts of folks. The sensual man, the sinful man, and the despairing man, all splash you with their grossness, their sin, and their despair. Nevertheless, the demand for friendship is constant. I have seen sharp men engaged at a bargain; both were intent on making a good thing of it, and yet they spoke in the language of courtesy, with much by-play of words, as if fellowship rather than trade were their main business. But I don't see how there can be much refreshment of man by man, until the love of God comes into the hearts of men. When the church shall become a living body, then society will be a fit place for men to reïnforce one another; until then, people will either slink away, or resort to shams to conceal the poverty and hunger of their hearts

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XXI.

MY scientific friend says he likes to walk on the farm of a man who tills his land for the love of it. Putting one's heart into his work is a good thing; I like to see a man do it. I have seen wonderful success follow the men who have been content to work for love, and who have taken their pay in hope. I often come across bankers, merchants and manufacturers, who are rich enough to keep a farm for a play-ground, and I then think it is worth while to have money since it enables a man to make play of his work. These men paint their barns, they make their fences one board higher than do their neighbors, and they put more stones into their walls; they draw many loads of muck into their yards, and they put much manure upon their fields; they plow deep, and raise longer ears of corn than other people. The close-fisted man

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who employs me, says he "shouldn't like to eat their hasty pudding, it would taste so strong of money, though the corn was raised for the love of it." These men's farms are pleasant walking-places; I see much corn and buckwheat there, and many turnips; red clover and herd's grass have the entire sway in the meadows, occupying all the ground to the very foot of the fences; there are no burdocks in the cow's tails, and no "devil's pitch-forks" to stick in one's trowsers. However, for every-day walking, these fine farms don't wear like a place where the weeds and bushes have a chance to hold up their heads.

A man doesn't have to go far to find people who work for the love of it. The number of men who have leaned on my garden fence and given me advice, is not small. When the governor visited our town, he is said to have looked over toward my land and to have suggested grapes for my clay bank. I have concluded that the business of giving advice is pretty much overdone, the number of people engaged in it is so amazing. It makes me hot to see how ready some

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folks are to guide you, not much matter where, they have so great a love for the work. I have seen miserable little skippers who sailed from Podunk, and who wrecked themselves in the fog on Goose Island; and after all that they will come around and offer to pilot your ship to the Cape of Good Hope. The demand for advice is, I notice, somewhat limited, and when men want it they prefer to buy it. The world at present seems like a crowd of deaf men engaged in shouting counsel to one another, while goblins stand about rubbing their hands in high glee over the spectacle. Nevertheless, I imagine that a candid review of our lives would reveal the fact that our best and happiest acts have been those we did when humble enough to accept advice or criticism.

I find a good many New England farmers who, I am sure, work for the love of it. A piece of poor land has a wonderful fascination for these men; they can not be easy until they have made it yield a good crop in spite of its poverty. Wherever I go, the soil assails me with agricultural problems which

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challenge solution. I don't carry the eyes of a farmer with me when I visit Wallingford plain, but for all that, it always beguiles me into studying how its barren sand can be made to yield bread or timber. I sometimes observe an Irishman's garden on the plain or in some hollow scooped out at the foot of the mountain; I imagine that the little spot is mine, and I at once project some improvements just for the love of it; for these poor patches don't often get much enrichment beyond what comes from the home feelings and from a small amount of hope plowed in at planting time. Mr. Hokum takes an agricultural paper, and he wants to improve every piece of land he sees. Some one saying to him that there was no depth of soil in the swamp which he was draining, he said, "I don't care if there isn't—I can make a soil!"

The soil of New England is her greatest educational institution. Yale College and Harvard are doing something in the way of science and literature, but for thorough schooling they don't begin to compare with the old

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meadows and pastures which have nursed successive crops of Yankees for two hundred years. Our farmers grapple zealously with the tough problems of the soil, and they gather a few potatoes into their cellars, a little corn into their granaries, and some hay into their barns; but in the meantime they have been putting ingenuity and perseverance and energy into their very blood and fiber. A Yankee doesn't go West or South to enlarge his ideas, he goes there to find room for them. When I have called at the farm-houses among the whortleberry-pastures, the old people have told me of their sons who had gone abroad to act in the professions or in wider spheres of business, and I have been much impressed by the amount of latent talent there is in the New England farmers.

But the most noteworthy people who work for the love of it, are the men who build

DRY SAW-MILLS.

When I go across lots, my path is sometimes intercepted by a dike and a ditch which go creeping this way and that, along the base

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of a hill. At one end of the dike is a brook scarcely larger than a ribbon; at the other end there is the foundation of a mill, or an old water-wheel tilted over by the decay of its supports, and rotting amid grass and weeds. At other times the highway cuts through an earthen dam; I certainly know it is a dam, for it is built across a little hollow where I can see a pebbly channel in which water once ran. Bunches of willows and alders have sprung up at the foot of the embankment; its sides are green with grass, while the end next the road is kept naked by the cattle which go there to hook in the dirt. One's imagination kindles at the thought of these folk who have water on the brain — for none others would think of building a mill in places so dry — and you feel a sort of yearning toward the simple man whose heart was kindled up by an enthusiasm for water-wheels.

But Connecticut is not the only State in which you can see mechanical genius going to waste in out-of-the-way pastures. These dry mills can be found in places where the long gray streamers of Spanish moss hang from

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the branches of southern cypress trees. I have seen these mills standing on northern rivulets, and they were shaded by white pines whose moanings cause sensitive people to slink away as we do from the men and women who have let loss and wrong turn them into cynics and darklings.

With the men who have a passion for mills, the mere sight of water seems to be enough to set all their wheels a-turning. When a man has something in his eye, it is hard for him to see things just as they are. If one of these men has a little brook which comes tumbling down through his pasture, making eddies for the fish where it takes a turn against a big rock, or one that wanders through a meadow between banks tufted with spotted alders and red dog-wood, he will find means to build a mill and make a dam to stop the trout, and to flow a pond which disappoints the frogs by drying up in the summer.

A man who has been studying flowers to discover the evidences of design, may find his interest flagging; but let him find a dry saw-

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mill, and he will take a new start. I always stop to look at these mills. I often feel great admiration for their ingenious contrivances; everything is all ready for business; brains have done their work, and nothing is wanting except water, and that, I suppose the proprietor carries in his head. The brains of mill-owners don't stop going, even if their water-wheels do refuse to revolve; so a little grist-mill is added to the saw-mill, and then, perhaps, a cider-mill.

The men who build these mills are ambitious men — they like power, that is, they love a water-power. They delight in playing with power, and in making it dart around among their water-wheels, cog-wheels and levers. I see a great many boys playing with water-wheels and making miniature dams in road-side ditches. We have all played in that way. After awhile we quit that and go off to work for the newspapers, or to till a farm, or to build mills on the Quinnipiacs and Merrimacs; but these men stick to their play, and fill the blood of their families with mechanical talent. I am not going to dispar-

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age the tinkers, for I see that mechanical genius is just now taking all the great prizes.

When flanked and supported by chance groups of old chestnuts and by thickets intensified by an admixture of hemlocks, a little old mill with its steep roof of black and mossy slabs, and with its rudely roofed cider-presses, sometimes gives one a taste of the picturesque, which makes him a little ashamed of our conscious attempts at ornamentation, and which, for a moment, makes him believe there is a power waiting to convert all our works into beauty, if we will only work reverently and simply like children.

The mill which I have in mind to-day, stands where two long, wooded banks converge like the waist of an hour-glass. In the winter time, the pond above yields a great harvest of ice: in the summer and fall it produces a crop of sickle-grass, smart-weed, downy-topped wild-grass and cat-tails. Below the mill is a ravine worn into the red sand-stone and crossed by a bridge, looking under which one sees a pool of water, gray tree-trunks and a misty shadow. In the bot-

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tom of the crooked ravine are slimy stones, willows, alders, and bits of boards strayed from the mill. Chestnuts, yellow, red and white oaks, two or three birches and hemlocks, all cling to the upper edges of the rocks and stretch their limbs across the chasm. Witch-hazels cluster at the foot of the trees; partridge-berries, and ferns which keep green all winter under the snow, nestle among the shrubs, and broad lichens creep down the sloping rocks; thimble-berries hang their long, mealy branches over the face of the red stone. Under the mill is the blackened water-wheel and a smell of rotten wood, and a few leaves and sticks entangled in the wooded grating which bars the entrance to the flume. In the upper part of the building, where work should be done, is the carriage; and on it are the two great mill-bars and the dogs with iron teeth to hold down a log. There are dead stalks of mullein and scabish in the lumber-yard, and four or five stocks of weather-beaten chestnut boards, carefully piled upon blocks, a stick having been put between every two pieces of lum-

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ber. On the other side of the mill is the log-yard. In it are some chestnut logs with yellow ends; a few knotty sticks of white oak which show a union of season-cracks and concentric layers, that looks like a spider's web; and some old timbers, the bark of which has rotted away from the top and slipped down the sides in long strips, to show how the worms have done their work.

In the winter, hopeful men bring their logs to these dry saw-mills. Ox-teamsters may be seen there, walking at the shoulders of their near-oxen, or riding on their sleds and holding on to the great rough-hewn stakes by a hand and one knee, while they flourish a long whip-stalk with a very short lash. In the spring-time, when the snow is melting and little twisted rills are running down the slopes, the ponds fill with water, and then the sleepy old mills wake up for a time; they have waited long, but their inspiration has come at last. The waters make a noisy rush at the mill-wheel, the saw is working with hurried energy, and there is a smell of saw-dust and fresh-cut lumber. The passer-

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by hears the loud *chuck, chuck* made by the heavy mill-bar as it drives the dogs into the ends of the log; and the sawyer filing his saw, makes music for those who stand far-off and listen in the morning air.

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XXII.

IF Washington Irving had staid at home and walked in Connecticut he would have found themes enough to inspire his tearful genius without going to visit Westminster Abbey or English churchyards. A man who likes to go mousing about in quest of painful things, will find a plenty of occasions when handkerchiefs are more needful than an umbrella to insure dry walking. But I am not going to add to the literature which is inspired with that poor sentimentality which people cultivate at funerals and in graveyards. Enough of that sort of writing has been done already. When I read the pages of some master of pathos, I am often tempted to fling his book aside in order to escape from the old gnome. There is no lack of people who will let you join them in the grisly entertainment which they get from contemplating the strange growths

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that spring up around the grave. I was once cornered up where I was obliged to listen to some women who discoursed of disease, and doctors, and drugs, and death, until I hardly dared to turn about to look, for fear I should see a pair of ghouls instead of two practical Yankee women capable of going through wifehood or widowhood.

I can not walk anywhere without feeling the gloom which invests many of the outward signs of popular religion. The meeting-houses where men are exhorted to well-doing because they must die, often have a nearness to the graveyard which suggests the idea that death is the main pillar of the church. The bells ring out their loud knells, which go circling wider and wider until they reach the farmers in far-off-meadows, and the choppers in the woods; but these loud-mouthed callers to the town are silent when children are born, when lovers join hands, and when some man has found a shining truth.

A little old Puritan burying-ground in some back pasture, where the first settlers of the town were laid, has a pathetic interest for

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him who stops to note the broken tomb-tables and the broad lichens which envelope the angles of the headstones, or to decipher the grotesque carving and the faint records of young men and maids who vanished from life at its very portal. The solid farm-house which has been abandoned to alien broods who swarm around its blackened and greasy door-ways and who break down the lilacs and destroy the domestic herbs, tansy, catnip, fennel, horse-radish and comfrey, has a sort of pathos, and so have the vagabond women whom I see sitting on the sunny side of banks, to keep out of the wind while they do a day's work of patching—two great bundles of rags sitting there, and surrounded by shreds and tatters.

But one may feel pathos in scenes where the actors are conscious of nothing but a rude comfort. I once encountered an old tramp sitting by the wayside; his heels were drawn up close to his seat and with his arms he embraced his knees while he smoked. Before him was a small fire of sticks, at one side of him was his bundle tied up in a red

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pocket-handkerchief, and overhead were the branches of a dog-wood. Slender needles of rain were beginning to come from the leaden clouds, and I thought to comfort the man with a word of friendly attention; but he gave me a bow which revealed a wealth of animal enjoyment and made me feel as if I were the poorer man.

In the fall there is no lack of things which are pathetic; most people drink their cider and eat their apples with a slight flavoring of sadness as soon as the leaves have fallen, and the frosts have killed all

THE POKE-WEED.

This plant, (*Phytolacca decandra*), variously known as skoke, pocan, garget and pigeon-berry, is altogether the most noteworthy herbaceous perennial which I ever encounter hereabouts. Growing to the height of nine feet, and being, I believe, the only species which in this region is included in the natural order *Phytolaccaceæ*, it has something of the grandeur and isolation of genius. I often find myself turning aside to get a nearer look

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at it, just as we go out of the way to steal glimpses at unusual men or beautiful women.

Poke grows more or less in all sorts of soil, but seems to prefer those which are rich and moist. In the spring I have seen a circle of these plants growing around the edges of the blackened patches of earth which are made in the turf when we burn a brush-heap When the timber has been cut off from the sides of a ravine, much poke starts up in the bottom of the hollow, growing with great vigor, in company with the sprouting stumps of chestnut. It delights in the rich deposits of sand and gravel and ordure which are washed from the highway into the angles of the fences. The mossy stakes, the interlocked rails, and the smooth, purple stems of the poke-weed, then make a little group which invite a second glance. It sometimes gets into a safe corner in the vicinity of a barn where it grows amazingly, overtopping the fences and outglorying everything in its neighborhood. It thrives on the rocky promontories which jut into the Sound, where it can feel the moist breath of the surges. It

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loses none of its charms there, but growing in green niches along the cliffs, it blends its beauty with that of rocks, spotted with lichens, with that of the coral-fruited barberry, and with the splendor of the pepperidge trees and Virginia-creepers which have mingled their scarlets to outblaze everything.

The men who doctor horses occasionally make use of poke-root for a seton. In places where it is not native, people sometimes put it in their gardens to grow there in company with the medicinal herbs which are supposed to be good for the women and children. A farmer gossiping with his neighbor in a stable, begs a piece of the root to plant at home, and thus poke extends its acquaintance. The autumnal beauty of most plants is richest in the flower or in the leaf, but the glory of poke, as another has said, is in the color of its stem. Its purple is regal, and it takes a strong hold on the imagination of men. I have known the sovereign people, when marching in procession, to carry canes cut from the stalks of poke, to add to the pageantry.

The habit of this plant is such that the

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year always seems too short to bring it to maturity. Its racemes of flowers are borne on the extremities of the branches, which at once push on to produce new fruit. Thus when the frost comes and kills the foliage and flowers, leaving the purple stems to grow paler and paler after each succeeding frost, you feel toward the great ruin, as you do toward your friends who have never had a fair chance.

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XXIII.

THE powers which build the great shops along the Quinnipiac, are in no haste to disturb the little peaked-roofed saw-mills which men have built on the brooks; and I am glad of it. I everywhere find signs of great charity and toleration, as well as newness, in the heart of the Being who looks after men and nature, and I have concluded that a man who wishes to enjoy himself, needs to be something of an old fogy. Why should we be in a perpetual fret about progress, when so many agents are at work softening and beautifying everything that is or ever has been; planting lichens where the quarrymen have been at work, twining vines about the dead trees, and putting a rude music into the throats of blue-jays and ravens? Nevertheless, I am going to spend my money for the best and freshest things the age can show. I notice a great many people who are somewhat anxious about the

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far-off and ideal, just as if somebody had blundered when the near-at-hand and common were made. I should be sorry to learn that I have ever said anything to increase this unrest, there are so many who need lullabys and some one to amuse them with a bass-wood whistle. We are all hungry for some sort of beauty. In many places the women talk of pretty men, as if prettiness, rather than power, were a desirable quality in a man; and I wonder how it is homely people are ever born; but this is a matter which corrects itself; for when it comes to getting married, a woman generally joins hands with the strongest man who happens to want her. The marks of progress toward the true and beautiful, can be seen everywhere. I hear music when I go by the rich man's house, and I hear it when I pass the dwellings of men who own neither farms, nor shops, nor offices; but I don't forget to keep my ears open to such melody as there is in all the

COMMON SOUNDS.

I listen to familiar sounds because they are old, and therefore pleasurable and half poetic.

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The noise made by the most common industries soon becomes encrusted with such lichens as the memory plants, and then it becomes the poet's property. We like to listen to the hooting of owls and to the cawing of crows, but it takes some time to outgrow the desire to throw stones which we felt when we first heard a peacock or a Guinea-hen. Time and use, softening the rigors of our hard common-sense, are always at work making every-day things more tolerable. On some of the farms I notice great well-sweeps rudely balanced in rough crotches cut in the woods. There is a large billet of wood fastened to one end of the sweep, and at the other end is the well-pole, made smooth for the hands. Hanging to it is a black, iron-bound bucket which disappears within the weather-beaten curb and plunges down the well, lined with mosses and crowned at the top with a circlet of polypod brakes pointing at the water. It will be some time before our patent well-curbs with their winches and self-filling-and-emptying buckets will be able to charm the imagination like the old well-poles and sweeps which make a sharp

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angle against the sky. If I write about familiar sounds, it should be done with a melody and rhythm like that which the wood-sawyer makes.

My path seldom fails to cross the railroads; I never get out of the hearing of the engines. The whistle of the locomotive is the voice of the nineteenth century, and it has a great deal to say in this region. It is always saying "Be strong and don't be small; do your best; be practical and drive straight at your mark; lose no time in dreaming, or in vain regrets!" Farmers' boys, who hoe corn all alone in fields remote from the railways, sometimes hear the faint whistle of the engines or the rumbling of the cars on the distant bridges, and a feverish discontent gets into their blood, and they are eager to go where men live in throngs, and where the tide of life is deep and strong and has no eddies. The roads which pay the best always shout and shriek the most loudly, for the same reason, I suppose, that rich men are allowed to make the most talk in some places.

Along the Quinnipiac and in the towns one

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hears the buzzing of saws, the loud thuds of the drop-presses, and much noise of machinery. In the morning and at noon the uproar of steam-whistles and steam-gongs, a good deal toned down by the distance it has traveled, comes to me from the great shops and factories where men are called together to work in gangs under foremen. The subordination which prevails in the shops, aided, perhaps, by Christianity, is beginning to have its effect upon the men of Connecticut, who, I think, are the most mannerly people among whom I have ever traveled. The children are so deferential in their address, I am without fear of disrespect when I walk among them. But we shall not very soon bear so many marks of an oppressive society as do the Englishmen who mix their talk with many servant-like "Sirs."

The rattle and clack of looms in the cloth-factories make a din which impresses me like the heat of a great bonfire; the hot tongues of sound dart at me and scorch my hearing like the sharp jets of flame. In some places I am arrested by the thunder which comes from

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the shops where forging is done by trip-hammers. At the foot of Mount Carmel, where a brook comes pouring down among the high rocks which are dotted with cedars and crossed by the paths of workmen, is a place where men work amid the grandeur of the mountain and the clanging and cracking of the trip-hammers. I have been there when the air was darkened by falling snow, and watched the forge-men flitting about in the red glare of the furnaces, and listened to the thunderous echoes which rolled back from the dark sides of the mountain, or crept away along its base, till I was ready to imagine that Jupiter was thundering while he made his own bolts.

Soon after the rye is harvested the sound of flails may be heard in the farmers' barns. I sometimes hear two men threshing together, and then I am inspirited by listening; but when I hear only one flail going, I am fatigued, for I go to work to put in the alternate strokes. If I go near the barns I find shrewd and weather-beaten men pounding away at the sheaves; I notice heads of rye

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hanging down between the poles over the barn-floor, and I see heads of timothy and red-top on the sides of the hay-mow in the great bay. I hear the rustle of the straw and the patter made by the kernels of grain falling back upon the floor. I have also been in churches and heard the minister pounding away at his theme, when I was sure he was threshing straw, for I could not hear the kernels of thought falling any where when I listened. After the flails have ceased then comes the muffled rattle of the fanning-mills. I notice threshing-machines at work, but they can't bewitch the considerate men who still have faith in the hickory swingel tied to the flail-staff with tough eel-skin, and so they continue to mingle their flail-music with the whistle of engines and the intonings of telegraph-lines.

There is always something to be heard in the farm-yards, where the domestic fowls gather around the opening to the barn-floor. The cocks bear their red crests very high, and the hens are at work, with their tails in air and their heads down, to search after

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seeds, stopping once in a while to scratch a little or to take a wider look. The cocks are always triumphant and crow at all times, never being 'cast down except by jealousy. In the spring-time when it pays to look after eggs, I hear a great deal of cackling about the barns, just as I notice much talking in some places where children are born. A little later when the hen begins to get anxious about eggs and chickens one may hear much fierce clucking. The hens when off duty or undisturbed by their passions, walk about in a lazy and reflective manner, and say *crake, crake, crake.*

About the middle of June the farmers begin to pick out the tangled patches of grass which grow in the best places around the barns. The walker can then see men with their loins girded up for mowing, and he can hear the *swish* of their scythes. The mowers, each with a black spot at his left arm-pit, step into the points of the shadows which lie on the ground, and make pleasant music with their rifles and whetstones. The man who sharpens his scythe with a stone, makes a lively, ring-

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ing clatter, but the queer men who trust to the old-fashioned rifle, play a dull, wooden tune, which never wakes the echoes. When the farmers begin haying on their smoother lands, one can not fail to hear the sound of the mowing-machines, now rising and then falling, now swelling and now dying away, as it creeps up from sultry meadows, where the resistless engine is sweeping around the big square of red clover. The noise of the mowing-machine became poetic at once, it was so suggestive of rest to any one who had ever swung a scythe. Since the coming of this great singer and worker, the farmers have seen some halcyon days, and it has become much easier to believe in the millennium.

In places remote from the great highways I find men in corn and potato fields, who watch the great world as from an observatory, and who make much clicking with their hoes against the stones. If I inquire for the best road, the rattle of the hoe stops and the clack of tongue begins. The man asks for my knowledge of the world. And after we

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have finished our barter in words, he resumes his clatter among the stones while he digs his Peach-blows, Mercers, or Black Carters. In the old pastures and along the roadsides, I hear the dull, heavy tinkle of the cow-bell, and in most places I hear dinner-bells; but once in a while a blast from an old-fashioned tin-horn comes to me from some farm-house, where father sits down with his family to a dinner of boiled pork, hot rye-bread, vegetables, and cider drawn from a musty barrel. On a clear frosty morning, I sometimes hear the loud chucking made by the wheels of loaded wagons which are passing along the roads. I hear the splash of hoofs on wet nights, and on other nights there is the jar of feet on the ground, the hitting of iron shoes against the stones, the faint rumble of light wagons driven rapidly across the bridges of the Quinnipiac, and the shouts of revelers who have descended a great way from the Puritans. The dogs bark at you at all times, and make dashes at your clothing. When a dog barks at me I always think it is his master who is barking. You may think your

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own thoughts about the man who keeps a dog to express the inhospitality, suspicion and ferocity which he himself dares not avow.

In the winter, when the frost, like some ghostly ax-man, is making the trees crack, the wood-choppers come to the timbered knolls which feed the rills; they go to work, cutting the stumps very low and the brush very fine, and they fill the woods with the sounds of their axes. I sometimes stop to listen to their noise, and to watch for the blows which are made when the ax cuts across the grain, or for those which utter a deep-toned *chop* when a great chip is loosened. At these times one can hear the loud crashes made by the falling trees, which stir up far-off echoes and make the earth groan. The ox-teamsters come to the woods after the choppers, and I see them coming down the hills with the heavy-laden sleds which creak on the snow, and I hear them shouting at their oxen, while they walk at the heads of their teams to restrain them with blows from a whip.

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LOOK AND LISTEN.

Once, in the glad beginning of the year,
When flocks of honking geese did northward fly,
A noted three — a busy, bustling wife,
A merry maid, a crooked, bearded crone —
Went forth to sniff the air and look and listen.
That thrifty, careful dame did nothing hear
Except the cackle of her spotted hens,
And tale of neighbor passing in the road,
Who spoke of one as wed, or born, or dead.
That gleesome, giddy girl would only hear
The robins in the fragrant poplar trees,
And the hum of bees among the snowy plums.
But she of withered jole could nothing hear
Except the tearful strain of mourning doves,
And dismal plaint of lonely, starving owls.
And each one hearing only what she did,
Thought herself wiser, shrewder than the rest.
There was that day, a solitary man —
A stalwart seer — who went not out at all,
But staid within, and watched from morn till night
To hear the word of God; and when it came,
He knew himself a softer, meeker man,
And shrewder, wiser far, than all the rest.

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XXIV.

WHEREVER I travel I find a plenty of signs that remind me how much men live by eating. One may get a great deal of nourishment in other places besides at the table, but for all that I always find it necessary to take bread with me when I spend a day on foot. In the morning you may see men going along the roads, or across the lots, to their work, each one carrying his dinner-pail and cup; on a summer noon you may see them eating their bread and meat in the shade; in the fall when the air gets icy, these dinner parties are held in the broad patches of sunshine on the south side of some bank or pile of lumber. When I come home in the twilight, I meet men hurrying to suppers that are warmed by such heat and flavored with such spices as mother and the children can give. I once saw the blue-shirted blacksmith getting ready to go

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to his tea: standing in the dark square of the shop-door, with a faint glimmer from the forge behind him, he stared hard at me, as if smiting an iron, and then he stooped to wash himself in a pail of water placed on the floor; putting his hands together like a dipper, he dashed his face with half a pint of water, and bringing up the liquid first with one hand, and then with the other, he washed his arms to the elbows. The roadside turf shows burnt places hardly larger than my cap, and they tell where vagabond cooks have squatted to boil some tea or coffee in a tin cup, resting on two small stones.

You may notice some scrambling to get the means for luxurious feeding. It is indeed covered up by the snatching after wealth, but look closely into the matter, and you will see the hungry scramble to get the best bits. The girl who does my work don't see how there can possibly be too many good things for the table. I am myself looking out for better grapes than the Isabella and Delaware to plant in my own garden. But the luxuries don't seem to be intended for everybody; they are not always within reach.

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A little genius, I imagine, goes further than money in the business of living well. If a man is hungry for the good things, and can't get all he wants, let him put a piece of unbuttered bread in his pocket, and go on foot to the pond or the woods. I have tramped to the mountain before now, and rested myself on a carpet of hemlock boughs spread upon the snow, while I ate my piece of wheat-meal bread, and warmed my feet by a fire that sent its smoke curling upward among the branches of a hemlock tree. At such times I have found a wondrous flavor in common food, and I have been filled with increased respect for my diet, and for those women who stay at home to hover over the delicacies of the table.

It is not easy for one to separate himself from all luxury. You cannot go off to spend a day on the road, without taking some appetizing thing, perhaps a cooky seasoned with sugar from the West Indies, and ginger from the East, just as our books are flavored with thought brought from Greece, and Rome, and Hindoostan. He is called a poor man, and a poor scholar, who can not mix his food with

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foreign spices, and his native thought with some idea gathered in far-off times and places. He is a brave man who dares to speak the simple thought of his town; and she is a brave cook who dares to invite her guests to partake of dishes seasoned with sage, or caraway, summer-savory, or fennel.

Having seen the vagabonds eating in a hurried and beggar-like fashion, with their noses close to their plates, I have concluded that all men don't eat the same things although they may sit at the same table and dip from the same dishes. If my senses only are concerned in my eating, I miss some part of my nourishment. He eats the most highly seasoned dishes, who can bring intellect, imagination, and love to his table. With this in view, walking to get an appetite, is not a bad thing, but it is not the best. A man who really walks has shaken off some part of his animal, and he brings home a new man to sup with him. If I have neither read of India nor traveled there, how can its spices appeal to any part of me except my senses? I know something about the sea-shore; and therefore

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I smell the odors of the beach whenever I eat clams, and I find myself the owner of vast salt-meadows without being obliged to cut the marsh-grass and stack it on piles driven into the mud at the base of the stack-poles. The man who drinks at a forest spring, from a shell tinted on the inside as with rosy morning light, not only quenches his thirst, but he drinks a little of the sea. Men and women sometimes eat bread and drink wine in churches with much solemnity of circumstance, as if they were also eating the living word of God. If this ceremonial is really what it seems to be, it is the very highest kind of eating, and it should at once be made a perpetual rite in all our dining-rooms.

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XXV.

WERE all things right, I have no doubt that every one of us would do his duty. There is no lack of people who will do a little walking on a warm May day, when the apple-trees are loaded with bloom as with snow, when the air is dense with perfumes, and when there is a great hum of bees at work in the orchards. But if a man has work to do, it is not best to be too particular about the conditions, unless, perchance, he has beans to hoe, for that is a job which must be done in dry weather. I have seen a great deal of picking for the best times and things: indeed, most people act as if they thought they should be happy if they could only have the pick of things. If I wanted to be sure of pain I would take the liberty to cull for myself. It is bravest to take things as they come, and let the heavens choose for us; nevertheless,

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I will, if need be, grapple with my circumstances and shape them all I can. What if we are cast down and don't get what we want? At such times we can dig a little deeper into things, just as the farmers in a dry season improve the chance to deepen their wells. It is not best to overrate the sunny banks and cushioned seats. Let no man be afraid to take a good broad section of life; let him cut right across from bark to pith, like butchers cutting through the red meat and the fat, through gristle and bone, to make their steaks. Most people like to have it known that they know enough to stay in when it rains; but I have found that there is something to be had by

WALKING IN THE RAIN.

He who walks on a rainy day does a kind of wet thinking. His thoughts are faded by the rain; they come to him dripping with water; and all his ideas are a little misshapen, like the things one sees on the bottom of a pool. The people who walk about upon the wet earth seem to be repeating the miracle

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of walking on the water. Men emerge from the mist and then disappear in it, and they impress one like quaint forms of vapor which flit and vanish. I more than believe the doctors who tell me that a man's body is about nine-twelfths water.

Thick coats and umbrellas are good things for the body on a rainy day, but how shall a man resist the down-pouring of water when it threatens to flood his soul? A vague sense of disaster comes and goes in the heart of a man who has walking to do on a wet day. He shivers with a dim sort of terror when the drenching mists pour over the hills, and, surging among the trees, settle down on pond and river: he feels a touch of awe, as if he had seen ghostly hands in the clouds, and he is stirred with a faint reverence that springs from fear. Good men sometimes tell me that their most crystal beliefs become a little opaque on rainy days and that the millennium seems to be somewhat postponed. But there are days when the spirit of frolic is in the storm, — when the fancy is thronged with misty nothings bright as the drops which the rain has left on the trees.

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If you walk on a wet day you are pelted by some other things besides the slanting rain which soaks the knees of your trowsers, and damages your wristbands and shirt-collar. There is no sympathy for you in your predicament; you are an actor, for all those who look on; and the wetter you get, and the more disaster you have, the better you do your part; and so the pit cheers all the more loudly. I think most people have the habit of looking at the world as a show put on the boards for their particular amusement. I have seen many people who lounge and wait for some trivial cause to rush into the crowd where they can stare at the small show, like boys who run to the wayside to see the wagons of a traveling circus. Does your house take fire, young men with their sweethearts will come to your show arm in arm as on gala days. Has your little victory carried you upward, or has your tragedy pulled you down; 'tis all the same for those who look on; they have had their tickle and you have had their cheers, and mayhap their jeers.

By carefully estimating how much water

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your coat will absorb without wetting your under-clothing, and by industriously dodging from one shelter to another during the pauses in the fall of rain, you can, if obliged to, make a fair journey on a drizzly day. I sometimes go into the bar-room of a dingy wayside tavern that is rank with odors and with such associations as gather about old places that have seen a great deal of human life of one sort or another. At other times I get shelter in a farmer's wood-shed, where I can note the saw-buck and the wood-saw, and the broom and mop which hang at the back-kitchen door. When I take to the road again, I leave a cluster of faces at the window: the round faces of the children, and mother's face which has grown paler and thinner, or perhaps more fleshy and red, since her trial of wifehood in a lonely farm-house. When I take shelter in a cider-mill, I have the smell of pomace, and I observe the old barrels that have been repaired with new hoops. I see the dripping cider-press, and the deep path worn by the horse that went round and round to grind the apples. I listen to the moans of the wind and to the water

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which drips from the eaves and falls into the puddles on the ground. When a walker can do no better he can place his back against the lichens on the dry side of a tree, and when the sprinkle is over, he can hear the drops of water as they fall from the branches and patter on the dead leaves.

A man traveling at night and on strange roads when the drizzle threatens to become a flood, is subject to some illusions. His thoughts become so water-soaked that he has little idea of heaven, except as a very dry warm place. On such nights I have passed farm-houses, and seen where the kitchen lights fell on the trunk of an ancient elm that over-topped gable and chimney. I have thought the people there to be dwellers in paradise. I would forget how likely it was that those well-housed folks were only discussing the prices of hay and milk, or the small deeds of their neighbors, or at best doing their small share of threshing at the bundle of daily news.

Spattering me with mud as they go past, the farmers drive off to town, to do some business that has been put off until a rainy

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day. I find them doing chores about their sheds, and I see them in their houses, sitting there with pantaloons tucked in their boot-legs, ready for a start on the first sign of fair weather; for a farmer can never unbend his bow. Before the rain they go hurrying about their meadows and stubble-fields to protect their hay and sheaves of grain. As soon as the storm is past you may sometimes see them hoeing the young corn which has been blown aslant by the wind; or you may see the long scratch in the road where the plowman had crossed it with his team when he went back to his work. Released from business on rainy days, when farm-work slackens a little, the boys hasten off to the trout-brooks, where you may find them standing in the drizzle, patiently holding their poles over the eddies, to catch fish and a little joy mixed with water. The earth-worms come to the surface where the ground is rich, and they make crooked lines in the soft earth; fresh gravel has been swept into the angles of the fences; the pebbles in the highway look cleanly; the hollow places in the

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road hold broad puddles which reflect the dun-colored clouds: and the brooks which go under the road, have become turbid with soil washed from the plowed fields.

On wet days the twigs of dog-wood and birch take a wash, and they give their brightest smiles to the hardy men who go to the woods to smell the incense which steams up from the ground where the leaves of oak and maple and tulip are rotting above the roots of spikenard, sassafras, and ginseng. He is a gross wooer who only stares at nature. I have sometimes gone to the pine-woods on a misty day to walk on the wet leaves which hush the sounds of my feet. I smell the odors of pitch, and think myself as well employed as when listening to overture or symphony, for I am sure the pineries appeal to something in me deeper than sense. I am then made ashamed of shallow talk, and I resolve to load my words with greater meaning. In fact, the breath of New England is resinous and inspiring; and some of her literary men have sat under pine-trees until their books have an odor of terebinth.

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XXVI.

THERE is a great feast of colors held in October, when everybody goes out to sup on crimson and scarlet and orange and gold. But it is followed by a long wet day filled with the patter of raindrops and the faint noise of leaves dropping. When the walker goes out again he hears the uproar which his feet make among the fallen leaves, and he knows the feast is over. There are some oaks and a few shrubs in the meadows which still hold on to their colors. After this the painted leaves have a little of that liberty which goes before ruin; they dance, and circle round and round, and run forward and back, until, drenched, and faded, and frozen, they creep into corners and under the bushes where they find rest, and wait for their resurrection.

I think most people have a drab-colored experience as soon as the frost has faded the

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last leaves of the scarlet oak. They expect to be color-hungry until the winter evenings, when the lamps fill the windows with red squares of light and make the snow look ruddy; and when we are wont to settle down and please ourselves with the tints of wall-paper, tapestries and carpets.

But why should I go to the town to see the people who ride in sleighs and who wrap themselves in robes lined with leopard-cloth and fringed with red stuff? Why should I go to the city to look at the scarlet opera-cloaks; or to a church to study the colors of the winter bonnets? I have business in the naked woods and among the thickets, as well as the farmer who goes there to cut a long blue beech for an ox-whip, or the school-master who steals off to the bushes to get a switch for his work. These are some of the places to which I go to select my winter colors. I once walked to the mountain on an early spring day to please myself with the color of lichens and tree-trunks; and when I wanted something particularly appetizing I sought after the scarlet *cladonia*. On the way

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I saw where a woman had set her geraniums out of doors to air them, and I was led to contrast my neutral tinted world with the gaily colored one which women are glad to make for themselves. That woman had been keeping a morsel of the summer to nibble at, while I had been trying to make the winter yield all I wanted. But it is not best to think ourselves deserted when nature puts off her fine clothes; it is better to go back to her even if she is clad in sober dress, just as we go back to our work, or to our poems, or to our science after we have read the column of flame and blood and sulphur-smoke in the daily paper. If you can do that you will find many a summer day which comes straggling in to join the column

IN NOVEMBER.

The day is fine
As mulled wine,
In gray and chill November;
'Tis ripe and prime and yellow,
Arched with blue, and mellow
As any in September.

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It is so freely poured,
As from a giant gourd,
I'll snatch a bit before it onward rushes—
Perchance a hint
Of love, or glint
Of light which on the mountain blushes.

Many of the winter colors, especially those which seem to belong to the wood and thickets along the Quinnipiac, are such fitful things and so illusive, it is hard to tell whether they belong to anything solid, or whether they are not caused by something in your eye. If you attempt to make sure of them, you hardly get more than children do when they try to gather a handful of fog. I am sometimes arrested by a thicket which fascinates me by the variety of its delicate and vapor-like colors. If I turn my steps toward it the spell is broken. I find myself standing before a clump of bushes none too good for the fagot-makers. When I get far enough away the fine tints reäppear, just as the phantom-lights in a haunted house are re-lit when the intruder leaves. The attempt to catch these color sprites, is like trying to

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seize the spirit of poetry to tie her down in your wordy lines. A man that is allowed to commune with the colors of winter may brag a little if he will only do it when alone.

In the winter, and in fact at all times when the trees are lifeless, the woods are veiled in a purple mist which is chiefly owing to the color of the youngest twigs. These tinted sprouts are the dreamer's property. The practical men who go into the woods to get fuel or lumber, don't take this painted bush; they select the mossy and blackened boles of trees. When I go to the town I look at the young sprouts who make a show in the streets; but if I want the strong pieces of timber, I seek out the men who have grey beards and ashen locks, and who wear thick overshoes and mufflers in winter.

The pale-green pitch-pines and hemlocks, black when seen at my distance, contrast strongly with the snow upon the sides of Beseck and Higby. On open winter days, when the snow is gone, the mountains display their best colors; pink and rose, and shadows that are blue and amethyst. I sometimes get

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a glimpse of the light-blue hills which lie beyond the mountains and join the earth to the sky. A boy who has a home from which he can overlook the purple hills to where a white spire stands in the blue haze, and thence onward, to a pale-blue spot in the far distance, will never be content until he has gone abroad, for he is hugging the sweet illusion that the dwellers in that far-off spot are more leisurely, loving and bright, than his fellows. We do not know but the great azure sky, with its wild play of clouds, amber and violet, crimson and scarlet, and gold, and leaden black, is spread over us in order to keep our imaginations stirred with thoughts of eternity, and heaven, and hell. I have myself had a great deal of trouble from this far-off spot of outer blue; but walking has corrected some of my notions.

From the top of Mount Tom I can see Long Island lying in the haze which rests on the edge of the sea. Looking in that direction has always been pleasant; so I put on my knapsack one day, and went across the Sound. I found a village on a small bay

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where the men build ships, and where the women allow one another to wear their sun-bonnets in the street. I afterwards walked on solitary roads which led me among pines and oaks, and across old fields, until I came to a weather-beaten town inhabited by men who gathered their harvests from the bottom of the sea. But I saw no men or women who knew not evil, or who had not a battle to fight.

The hillsides, after the wood-cutters have been there to cut off the large trees, spring up again with young oaks, chestnuts and maples, which sometimes take the appearance of a delicate ash-colored vapor. The flowering dog-wood or box, grows very abundantly on all our rocky hills. Its twigs have a dark garnet color, suffused with a whitish bloom. When I go near enough to these shrubs, their young shoots seem to blend into a mass of ethereal color that is almost within the reach of my hand. The red osier dog-wood, grows along the banks of all the streams; its young twigs are light-maroon. When seen in groups at a distance, this shrub gives a glow to the

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river-meadows like a deep blush on a pale face. If I leave the road to get a closer look, I find the dog-wood growing in company with alders that have amaranth catkins, with button-bushes and reddish-twigged willows, and with a wild grape-vine which has spread over everything and made a faint purple mist with its own branches. The brook where this thicket stands, sometimes shows a hole in the ice with silver edges, through which the water is seen rippling over stones that are olive-brown with slime.

The yellow willow is native to the banks of the Quinnipiac, besides being planted on the railway embankments, and about the farm-houses, and by mill-ponds where it makes a double show by casting its shadow in the water when the ice is gone. These trees are scattered all along the river, and when seen from a hill which commands the valley, they strike the fancy like warm patches of summer light which have lingered to cheer our winter landscape. At this season the stems of the white birch, two or three of which often diverge from the same root, display their

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chalky angles against the dark sides of the forests, as on a blackboard. The branches of this tree are brownish crimson when seen in a mass after the rain. The first time I noticed the color of the birches, was while I was walking on one of those rainy days when the sensibilities are blunted, and when the eye can only gather images which may possibly come back to a man and please him while he sits before the fire engaged in sorting and piecing together the scraps that fill his memory. I had reached a place in the road overlooking a wide growth of young birches, when I was suddenly flooded by their wealth of rich color, and made sensible that I was all alive. Since then it has been easy to believe that wet days have peculiar gifts in store for those who go abroad in the rain.

The thickets of blackberry briers which grow in the pastures and in the angles of the rail-fences, are dark-red. It is not uncommon to find a brier which keeps a few green leaves far into the winter. The black raspberry grows in the same places with the blackberry. These briers are a light-maroon,

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slightly obscured by a bluish-white bloom. Their delicate color and graceful curves cheer the walker at all times when the leaves are not on. This brier is sometimes cultivated in fields, where it makes a lilac-colored mist that seems to rest on the ground as lightly as do the vapors which creep along the surface of a pond.

The slender stems of the dewberry, creeping over the heaps of stones along the fences, make a net-work of reddish-colored threads that may be observed at almost any time in the winter. You may sometimes notice one or two of these vines that still hold on to a crimson leaf, and stretch across the lichens on the top of some grey stone that has been uncovered by the melting of the snow. The walker who visits the rocky slopes at the foot of Mt. Carmel as late as February, can generally find a few pale-scarlet barberries; and he can prove their acid to be as good for his thirst as their color is for his eye. When I visit Mr. Hokum's muck-swamp I can always find a few cranberries which grow on the mossy tussucks, and become darker colored

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and sweeter and better after their winter experience.

It is not wise to think that winter is a pale and faded thing, or that nature can ever be careless about her work of tinting. She is a great deal more thoughtful in this respect than are the women, or even those men who delight in short coats and high colors. It is because I have been gross and hasty, that I did not discover this before. The snow which covers the green fields of winter-rye and the pale-brown meadows, only leaving narrow strips of green along the edges of the brooks, and which hides the village of white houses until it impresses one like a flock of sheep that has been buried in a storm, is tinted by the sky on fair days, and the shadows of the trees are a very dark blue to those who are leisurely and observant. The poorest colors of winter may thrill us like prelude or interlude. I have gone among the trees after I have sat in libraries, and a pale-brown leaf which quivered on a beech-tree would please me more than the leaves of a book. But nature seldom fails to have an appetizing bit

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for the most dainty and feeble. The red-shirted wood-choppers are not the most spicy things the winter affords. The scarlet berries of the black-alder blaze and flame till far into the winter, like a red cloak in the street. This shrub grows in the wet pastures and all along the water-courses, where everything else pales before it. A man passing it on the cars may think he has had a glimpse of a bonfire.

The north side of a wooded bank sometimes offers a combination of objects which please by their variety of color. The red-brown trunks of old hemlocks, and the green boughs of the young ones, the ash-colored stems of white oak, the laurels which make a green lining for the woods in winter, ferns and lichens, peeping through the snow which spreads everywhere. Green is so linked with our ideas of summer heat, these laurel banks always make one feel as if he had found a place where he can go and warm himself. If you want something that will make a fiery contrast with the snow and laurels, dig down to the scarlet partridge-berries which grow under the hemlocks.

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Winter puts on a great deal of brown in Wallingford. The oaks and the young beeches and a few of the maples, keep a part of their leaves all this season of the year. This habit seems to be a peculiarity of individual trees as well as of a species. Of two maples standing close together, one will hold a few of its leaves every winter, while the other will be entirely naked. The leaves of the scarlet oak are dark-brown; those of the white and yellow oaks are light brown like russet leather. The beech and maple have pale, whitish-brown leaves. These dead things often get loosed from the trees, and the wind tumbles them about upon the snow where they leave marks that arrest you like the tracks of a bird. This brown leafage has a powerful presence and never fails to impress me. On very cold days when the wind blows, these brown things hiss till they make a man think all the elements hate him; but on pleasant days their rich browns please with their warmth, and their rustle strikes the ear like a light patter of rain on leafy trees, like the distant sound of a brook pouring over a ledge in the forest.

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XXVII.

I ALWAYS have to cross the Quinnipiac when I return from a walk among the eastern hills. At such times I pass under the gnarled limbs of a great swamp white oak and the broken limbs of a large chestnut which shade the gray oaken bridge. I note the river as it pours over the dam, where men wade in to catch lamprey eels. I watch it creeping away between banks of alder and willow and dogwood; and it impresses my imagination so strongly that I am often led to think I have walked too far, and that I should have done better had I staid nearer home.

The brooks and rivers all have a presence which strikes one like the atmosphere of a living thing. Notwithstanding all our Christianity and science and common sense, I should not at any time be surprised to meet

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a river nymph. The rivers and ponds must have impressed the Indians very forcibly, for they gave them names too strong to be conquered in battle, and too indelible to be faded with blood. These Indian names promise to hover over river and pond and mountain, as long as the Celtic names have clung to the same things in Great Britain. An Indian name seems to express that unspeakable quality in pond or brook, which touches the imagination. I feel unanswered when I inquire the name of a pond and only find that it is called Half-Moon or Metcalf; but if I hear that it is Magog or Quinnibaug, I am content, for I know that it is well named.

A river stirs you with a sense of mystery like the stranger who has not yet told his story, or like a man who can not show his pedigree. Every stream invites me to travel upward. I know where the Quinnipiac is going; it is hastening to wander among the stacks of marsh-hay in the salt-meadows, it is hurrying to freshen the oysters which belong to the men of Fair Haven, and to lose itself in the sea which booms against the coast.

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But who can say what man's cattle quench their thirst at its head-waters, or from what banks its brooks ooze, or through what hemlock thickets and rabbit-covers they run, or whose water-wheels they turned when young? It is not enough that you tell me all the rivers rise in the sea; for that is only doing like the men who, after justly referring everything to God and the devil, say they have no need of your science. I have traced a river to the mountain, and found its birth as grand as its death in the sea. It is easier to go down stream; most men go that way, and they seem to be rewarded. The people who go to the mouths of large rivers, build the great cities, and they speak confidently to the nation. But if you look on the map it will be found that the men who go up stream, build cities too.

A man in his time comes to more than one stream where he is promised that the winds shall be fair, and that there shall be no tugging at the oar, if he will only follow the current. But I have studied geography somewhat, and have concluded that I shall go up

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stream — whether by scow or on foot it matters not — until I come to the rivers which run in the right direction.

The great stream of western travel has always gone past my door. There are, I think, but few people who have not at one time or another thought of embarking on it. The blood of the nation surges westward in its veins. Half our children are born with their heads full of plans for a western settlement. Two of my family, after trying the west, have come back to New England, and I infer from this that our blood has nearly lost that impulse toward the west, which it has felt for two hundred years. It is not good for a family to be always a pioneer and a breeder of frontiers-men. Frequent transplantings only serve to keep a tree small until the nurseryman can sell it to the man who will plant it in an orchard. I followed this stream till I came to Chicago and St. Louis, and until I heard of San Francisco which stands where the river pours into the Pacific. These are all remarkable cities; but Boston standing among the head waters, seemed the most noteworthy

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town. The more I went west the more I wanted to go east; I would see the birthplaces of the nations, rather than those places where men forget their genealogies, and where families are lost like the brooks which are used to irrigate the meadows. The east attracts me still, and I find that I walk in that direction more than any other. I am more interested in the coast of the Atlantic than in that of the Pacific; I am less curious about the Sandwich Islands than about those Islands which are called British.

Mr. Hokum owns a great farm; and he has built five large barns upon it, and painted them. His dining-room is hung with fruit-pieces, prints of fish, and other appetizing things, and with a picture of a prize cow done in oil. The room is still further set off by a massive black-walnut sideboard which holds his silver ware. At breakfast his wife pours his coffee from silver vessels; and at dinner he spreads a napkin on his knee, and feeds himself with a silver fork. I do not know as Mr. Hokum is to blame for having

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all these things. They are the natural product of the man's life: you might as well blame an oyster for making a shell and lining it with a sort of pearl. I have looked into myself before now, but I did't find a farm and five great barns. Maybe I did not see anything except a small garden, a few "Foot-Notes" and a little white house, with green blinds and brass door-plate, standing under the maples; and it may be that I had a promise of better things than any which can possibly spring from my own life.

Mr. Hokum has a good library — two full cases stretching from the floor to the ceiling — but he does not pretend to be a literary man; neither does he make any show of poetry and sentiment. He is a practical man who knows the use of things; a farmer who sets the artist making pictures of his best cattle. Thinking like a writer, I sometimes imagine that he and all he has, are a part of my stock in trade; but when I see his talent for organization and management, I begin to think that he is one of the men who were born to set me to work, and that we writers are not so

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important as the editors try to make the world think. He has had no help from his family; yet he is not a self-made man, for I do not exactly believe in that sort of men; he has simply expanded according to the original plan made for him, and he has not been too proud nor too dainty to fight for elbow-room.

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XXVIII.

THERE is always a great deal of business going on in the woods and meadows; but at this time of the year when nature is taking a little rest, I am most alive to the immensity of work that has already been done. The amount of work that has been laid out on the buds of the blue beaches for example, is amazing — every bud nicely done up in scales that have their edges bordered with a color unlike the body. When I walk up to Meriden I am sometimes made ashamed of myself — the people there are always so busy; every man has either a callus on his palm or an ink-mark on his finger. I everywhere find men hard at work.

One might suppose that during the two hundred years which have passed since the old Puritans came here and began doing business in peaked hats, knee-breeches and bell-topped boots, enough work would have

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been done to finish up some things, and entitle folks to have a play-spell. I do indeed find some men who have inherited copies of the Bible and "Saint's Rest" which were printed in London long before the Revolution, and old houses that have been beaten on by storms until their walls are worn thin and are as full of holes as a basket; but I don't find any men who are excused from business because of the work their fathers did.

We have not got our work done yet, and I am glad of it. I am not a born reformer; nevertheless I like to see the reformers busy. Should any one of these enterprising men find a way to do up the world's entire job of work, and leave the rest of us to lounge on sofas, and thrum guitars, and write sonnets, I would myself turn reformer at once and smash his infernal monopoly of all the work.

Next to the grace and love of God — without which a man is a wretched starveling — I know of no better refreshment than work. It is good for a man to live so near the ground that his life and thought shall have

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something of that aroma which comes from the earth when farmers do their plowing. If I see a man of genius digging with a spade, I don't take him for a clod and tell him that Mr. Hokum wants another hired man, for I know that he is getting ready to make another flight. There is a writer of books within my circle of walking who came down from the thin region of literature some years ago, and went to managing a milk-farm to refresh himself. I want some one to tell me how it was that Christ passed by the lily-fingered scribes and pharisees — who had all the culture that was then going — and entrusted the blessed gospel to those fishermen, whose hands and muscles were toughened and hardened by rowing, and whose souls were refreshed by work.

I respect work, hard work, muscular work, gross work, if you are pleased to call it such: and it is not too late in the day for me or for five hundred other men to say so, or to continue saying so even here in New England where we think we know as much about work and civilization as any people who ever

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bared their arms or bent their backs. I have seen a wood-sawyer at work in a back yard: he had a clay-pipe in his mouth, and with his elbows sticking well out he vibrated his body up and down while he sawed the sticks of hickory: I respected his action as only a little less wonderful than clear seeing and clear thinking; I knew that his work was helping the gush of blood along his veins, for I had seen a "subject" lying on the dissector's red table, and had seen the students at work with a book of anatomy on the one hand, and a scalpel-case on the other, carefully dissecting away one curious muscle after another. When I have overtaken a wood-chopper shambling along the street and carrying his ax in the crook of his elbow with the helve sticking out behind, I have wished he could be something more than a simple worker; but fearful of getting a sniff of tobacco or whisky, or of hearing some gross remark, I have resisted the impulse to put my hand on his shoulder and tell him that I should be glad to have him dig in the same ditch with me.

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I know that Work thinks he don't get his share of the good things. He certainly does deserve more of the white meat and best slices than he now gets. I saw a man last summer who had a way of walking up a telegraph-pole; he fastened himself to the pole with a leathern belt, and while he fixed the wires he talked to me of rich men and riot, until I thought I had found one of the seeds of a revolution. But he who puts brain to work with his muscle, will get the best prizes. While Muscle is at work carrying his hod of mortar up the ladder, Brain takes a lease of the mansion and moves in and lets Muscle go back to his shanty. When Brain goes to rest in the church-yard, a tall shaft of stone is set up to mark his resting-place. If, however, he is of the sort of men who go to the making of books, I notice that you can not always count on finding the big stone. If Work wants to get his share I think he had better stop business and go to school.

Men and women make excuses to me for being found in their working clothes. Why should they, when their hands are no harder

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than mine? But I see the devil at work in the shops and on the farm, and I understand how it is that we are ashamed of our work. A certain vagabond has twice called at my house,—once here, and once in a place far from this, and has found me helping the girl at some heavy kitchen work. I wasn't ashamed of my job, for it is plainly to be seen that I am valiant in work when I have nothing else to do; but for all that, I did have a faint wish that even this tramp should know that I do sometimes sit in my best room and read poems in blue and gold. If work seems gross to any man, I know where the grossness lies. When I am ashamed of my work, I understand well enough that the beggar in me, and not the king, has gone out to work with me. If I am faithful to the task God has given me, I am certain that every job I get will have an unspeakable splendor and dignity.

I am going to define my position. If the devil or any man attempts to crowd me, and make me ashamed when I am digging in my garden, I will fight him as long as there is a

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bit of pluck in my heart. I intend to dig in the last ditch if I have a mind to.

I notice an upward tendency nearly everywhere — a tendency for men to quit work and rise into art. I often get a glimpse of the silver linings which men are always trying to put into their ragged lives. The dentist who mends my teeth keeps a clarionet; and the young man who works in the shop goes home to wash himself and play on a horn, 'Squire Lomas, the magistrate, does his business in a dirty office that is furnished with a rusty stove, a dusty case of books, a broken-legged table, a few chairs, and a greasy copy of the Greek Testament for the Catholics to kiss when they take an oath; but he gilds his work by writing verses. The milk-man, after refreshing himself on a farm, has gone back to writing books. As for me, I walk, and I read books that don't at all concern my business.

But if you are asking,

> "What is art?" Here is my answer:
> Leg of tramp, and toe of dancer.

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Sea-shells scooping up the river.
Pointed arrow snatched from quiver,

Deftly sped against the foeman
By a plumed and laughing bowman.

Bearded wise man gaily teaching
Better things than fill our preaching.

"What is art?" You have my answer:
Leg of tramp, with toe of dancer.

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XXIX.

THE prairies seem to me like vast deposits of bread and meat scarcely less wonderful than the deposits of coal and rock-oil, and I don't wonder that men with hungry families go west. But I am told that pedestrians find hard walking in those western places where the soil is fat with the elements of wheat and corn and beef and pork, and where the horseman does up the tail of his horse in a knot to keep it out of the mud. I can nearly always find dry walking here in Wallingford where the country is largely productive of good roads, rye-bread chestnut timber, paper buttons and German-silver spoons. Nevertheless, I have had some hard walking, for there are no guide-boards around here. The selectmen make good roads for us, and then leave every man to pick his own way.

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The folks in some places have better guidance than I get here in Connecticut. I once walked in Massachusetts. I found guide-posts everywhere, and I concluded that the men who had been paid to do the thinking there, had not slighted their job. Standing among trees at the corners of the village green, among briars and brush at the forks in the roads, and at the crossing of the ways which wander off right and left between lines of stone-wall, were shafts of primeval granite that told me how to reach Acton, Concord and Boston. These stones showed the long lines of holes drilled by the quarryman, and they told how earnestly he had wrought to guide people into the right roads. I walked from Marlboro to Groton, and found my steps so carefully guided as to make me think that those Massachusetts road-makers expected the whole world to come sooner or later and travel in their highways. There are some men, I think, who can't make a road to reach their own ends without leaving it wide enough and safe enough for every other man to use. But such road-makers are not plenty.

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If you are a man who gets along by traveling on cow-paths and by-ways, be modest, and don't ask me to take stock in your road.

When walking I often have to stop and inquire the way. I get directions from the horseman, who shows his confidence in the road he points out by driving bravely down it, never stopping to ask me to ride with him; I seek help from the farmer who is laying wall, and who wears a leathern apron split up the middle, one-half tied snugly to each leg; and I watch him picking up a stone which he holds against his belly and then puts on the top of the wall. I once intercepted a farm-wife when she crossed her yard; she held a milk-pan in one hand, and with the creamy finger of the other she pointed out the way for me to take, smiling the while, as if it were a strange thing that any one need to ask for the road from Guilford to Wallingford. I can always find my way by asking often enough. Some people think it is a grand thing to find their way without inquiring. I have myself belonged to that persuasion. But one gets along just as

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safely by asking as by knowing; besides, it is more social and humanizing. However, it is not easy to get full directions for reaching any place; a man can't be excused from working out his own problems. No man can generally tell you more than to "turn to the right, then turn to the left, go over the mountain, and then inquire again at Telus Todd's."

There is no lack of people who think they know just where they are: they have no need of inquiring their way — they are not lost. I often stop to ask for the right road, but I am not always sure that my informant himself is not lost. I live one mile from town, and twelve miles from New Haven, and seventy-eight miles from New York City, but that don't prove that I know my whereabouts in this world. A Concord man asks, "Is Franklin the only man who is lost, that his wife should be so earnest to find him? Does Mr. Grinnell know where he himself is?" My neighbor, Delaware Perkins, tells the story of an Indian, who, finding some difficulty in getting home, concluded that he was lost.

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But after wandering about in vain, he finally stopped short, and striking himself on his breast, said to himself, "Indian no lost! Indian here! Wigwam lost!" How many people are there who, standing in sight of their own houses can hit their own breasts and say, "This man is not lost"? I sometimes feel an impulse to go around and tap at the hearts of men to see if they really know where they are.

Knowing that I am desirous of finding the best paths, many people come to my house to get me to walk in the roads which they have found. Other men come to ask about my routes of travel; they put many questions but don't stop long for my answers, and so I conclude these men are more concerned about their own questions than about any discoveries I have made. Some people admit to me that they are entirely uncertain about their own routes — that they are only trying to walk in the cow-paths which lie just under their noses. I judge there is an immense number of this sort of people who do not travel at all in any important sense; they just

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live in the roads like the gipsies, never intending to go anywhere, not believing that there are any distant places worth going to. I encounter these vagabonds everywhere. Sooner or later they all fall to tinkering: grinding razors, making books, mending brass-kettles, editing newspapers,—all done with equal short-sightedness. I don't think there is any need of a man's confessing himself baffled by the snarl and tangle of roads in this world. By inquiring often enough a man can find his way to any place—to heaven if you please. If I don't find night-walking safe and easy, I shall wait until daylight and then hunt up the man who can tell me where to turn to the right, and where to the left.

I know that the minister and the lawyer, and even my neighbor Ravenstone, are doing something at setting up guide-boards, but for all that men do go astray on every hand. When I consider the great number of persons who can't find their own roads, I am amazed at the decorous fashion in which people go about to look after lost men. I meet folks going to church Sundays; they go leisurely

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in their best clothes, and hope they are doing all that is necessary for souls in peril. But why don't they get together in hot haste on a week day — the blacksmith in his apron, the painter with paint on his fingers, and the farmer in his coarse boots — to make an eager hunt for the soul who has gone astray, bringing him back, willing or unwilling, and setting him on the right road?

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XXX.

IT is good for a man to be able to march in a solid column with his fellows, not caring if his vision is somewhat limited by the dust, and by the men on either hand; for there are some things which can not be done unless you are willing to touch elbows with your neighbor. For all that, I like to sit on a fence a little apart and see the world go by. But I am no lounger. I can dig as well in my garden as any man in his; I don't often leave my work to see what old trees overshadow the farm-houses; or to get the earliest pepper-root to eat with my crackers and beef: I go abroad to see who it is that does all the work, and who it is that makes the dust and noise.

I have always found a plenty of practical men at every turn; but the poets and men of sentiment have been rather scarce. I don't

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think I am the only man who has made the discovery and been amazed. It may be that the poets don't show themselves to me. If the farmer, who stands on the top of his sled with his back to the wind, while he drives his six oxen right into the teeth of a north-western snow-storm, has a man of sentiment in his employ, he has not yet taken the pains to introduce him to me. If there is a poet in the store where I go to buy a new saw, I am sure he is not the man who owns the goods. He may be that young fellow who does his work half-heartedly, dreaming the meanwhile of splendors, and loves, and courtly people, and sadly perplexing himself because palaces are not ready-made. Indeed, most men seem as if they had been appointed quartermasters and engineers, they talk so much concerning the prices of goods, the uses of raw material, and modes of manufacture; and all this is just as it should be.

There is a great demand for practical men of one sort or another; there are vacancies every day which invite the best workmen. It seems to have pleased God to use these

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men for his warp and filling. I have had my quarrel with fate for putting the practical men into all the best places. I was beaten in that fight; and I now count it as one of my victories, for I have felt freer and better ever since. When I walk in the woods I imagine that nature is more careful to have the trees yield fire-wood and timber, than she is to have them produce flowers. An oak tree hangs out its tassels a few days in the spring, and every body is glad to go out and see them; but for the rest of the year it can only show a gray trunk, gnarled limbs and rude strength and dignity. If these don't please a man I think he had better let himself to a milliner, and learn to make bonnets.

It is somewhat refreshing to look at a practical man, who holds his imagination and fancy in strict subjection to reason, who never forgets the subordination of one thing to another according to the measure of its usefulness, and who lets strong-handed performance keep close to all his clear-seeing and deep-believing. He don't build his house on a hill-top in order to look at the sea; he

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puts it at the foot of the hill where he can have water run into his kitchen, and then if he wants anything of the sea he goes to the top of the hill and gets it. If he is in love, he goes a wooing; if he is angry, somebody quails; he don't sing his love, neither does he try to make his scorn rhythmical. You and I may celebrate him in verse if we think him big enough for that service. He raises apples to eat and grapes to sell, not caring much for the curious striping of the one or the bloom of the other; nevertheless the fruit is forthcoming and the markets are better supplied. I sometimes encounter men engaged in religion, philanthropy and art, whom I call practical. When such men go to work in those places, people are made better, things are righted, and beauty goes abroad.

Having noticed that some of the men who sit in garrets and write books, have a quarrel with the men who have no time for sonnets, I resolved to go into my garret sometime and do justice to those men who can't prate of their sentiments. However, I

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soon found that nature had a conspiracy with our practical folk. I began to suspect that the men who cannot live by bread alone, do feel a little oppressed by the sharp fellows who are able to buy the picture when done, and the statue when finished.

But the dreamers and workers are not so unlike. I once went out of my way to visit the homes of certain men whose books had pleased me with their brilliancy. I did not find those prose writers and poets living in the best houses, and so I was forced to conclude that they had put all their brightness into their books, while their practical neighbors had been putting all their glitter into their houses and on their front fences.

I, too, have had a chafe with the practical men who squander beauty. I raise my apples to make sauce, and I have a surplus of grapes for market; but I also try to look out for the crop of beauty which grows on my trees and vines. None but a poor man would be so wasteful as to let that go unharvested.

Practical men are a little too ready to assert that they are the only men who are

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wide-awake. I stopped a business man in the street of a certain town and inquired about an author, and he told me that my man was a dreamer. I afterwards talked with a man who was not cumbered with money, and he told me that this writer of books was a simple man and without pride—a pleasant man to talk with, and a lover of solitude. There is such a broad glare of daylight about some men, that one may justly look forward toward the night and dreams. I know that windows of white glass are generally in vogue; but if a man should have one window of stained glass and only speak of what he sees through that—what then? If he chooses to be silent until he can see things in the haze of an Indian summer—what then?

I find fault with practical men, they sometimes know so little about the use of things. John Brown was a practical man who stood ready to dash body and soul against incarnate evil. But was not that obscure man who wrote "John Brown's soul is marching on," just as practical? It may be that the guns which Eli Whitney makes in his shops at the

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foot of East Rock, are not half so potent as this song which has been sung in the farm-houses, and in the camps, and in the streets of conquered cities.

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XXXI.

THE man who weighs hay on the scales of Fairbanks in the village street, is not the only one who does weighing and gauging. No matter where I walk, whether in a meadow or in the town, I am weighed over and over again. If men don't weigh me, they look closely to see what marks the weighers and gaugers in my neighborhood have fixed on me. The farmer in Guilford who weighs his bales of timothy with great steelyards hung from the limbs of an elm tree before his house, answers all my questions politely enough, but I go away feeling as if he had measured me by my fitness to be one of the selectmen or to be put on the school-committee. I did not tell him that I had elected myself path-master for all the roads.

When I go into the woods, the rabbits leave their seats which they have hollowed

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out at the foot of the trees, and they hurry off, showing their short tails, and a great deal of white as they throw up their hinder parts. At such times I imagine that I am measured by my supposed appetite for meat; I feel as if all the wild things of nature were doing me an injustice. Why should the woodchuck think evil of me when my blood, like his own, ebbs and flows with the rise and fall of the sap in the oaks. I have before now seen a man weigh my coarse coat, thinking all the while that he had weighed me. I now keep one coat that is better than the other, and I wear it when I choose to take a little of the honor which is given to fine cloth and oil-paste blacking. But I have my revenge; for I have appointed myself weigher and gauger, and I am not going to shirk the business.

I am always meeting a man and woman riding together; and I am just as much amazed to-day, when I consider how much men and women travel together, as I was when I first noticed the fact. In a rebel state I once met a man and wife riding in compay; he rode on the horse and drove, while she sat on the

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axletree of the cart and let her feet hang down between the shafts. I have also seen a man and woman lopping on the back seat of a coach, and attended by a liveried driver and footman. Whether they ride in cart or coach, I always find that I am weighed, but it is the woman who measures me, for often the man does not see me at all. Shame-faced, or bold, or proud, the young women manage to flash one look at you which does the work. The wives, sobered and chastened, give me looks which tell of contentment, or resignation, or dissatisfaction. I have inquired about this scrutiny which I get from the women, and have found that I am constantly measured with an eye to my fitness or unfitness for taking the place of a lover or a second husband. I don't see why the wives should look at me oftener than their husbands do. Have they not married the men of their choice? Has not every wife found that man who was born and bred for her alone?

I am constantly reminded that love is everywhere the uppermost and undermost question. I see love building houses and laying away

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money for a rainy day, and making improvements for the children, which are the fruit of love. Having walked into the tailor's shop, and into the milliner's shop, I have learned that both are places where business is done in the interest of love. I have seen a great many girls come out in gay attire just as they were bursting into womanhood; I have been told that these fine clothes were worn on account of their intrinsic beauty. But I have done some thinking for myself, and I now understand that nature has a conspiracy with these girls to let me know that they are ready for love and a lover's uses. I meet many young women who are beautiful as a peach-tree in bloom, who are as grand as one of my old maples when the bees are humming among the blossoms; the beauty of these women makes them "terrible as an army with banners," and I feel an impulse to walk on the other side of the road. However I have never found any lack of men who are brave enough to marry these girls and repeople the town.

From the day when I began walking until

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this hour, I have noticed that the women have a certain authority and power of service in household matters, although they do not own much of the real estate. I have been much indebted to woman for her service, and I have kept a girl to do some part of my work ever since I have been for myself. But work and wages were not enough for her, so she has left me and married a man who wanted to give her love instead of money. I suppose I might have married her, and thus have owned her myself; but then she would have owned me too, and I could no longer render a sort of bachelor allegiance to all women. Moreover, I was not sure that marriage would be just what it promises to be; she would undoubtedly have promised to obey me, but I should have found that in respect to her dress she would obey all the rest of the women rather than me; women are so gregarious. Besides she might have settled down and become exceedingly devoted to me, forgetting that there are any other wants in the world except those I have for meats and drinks; and I might have intercepted much

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of the love and honor which she should be free to give to heaven and all decent men. Being married to her I should have taken her love as a matter of course, and thus have lost my power of pleasing other women. Mr. Ravenstone says, "If you want to improve the world, you must let all the women be free to love the best men, and then make every man win all the love he gets."

South-side banks dotted with dandelions, are good places for a man who has a job of waiting to do; but when I go to the city, I sometimes have to resort to the sunny side of a meeting-house. Having done so once, a well-dressed woman came along and walked up and down before me as if she were a good thing; she made an attack on me with her eyes, though we had never been introduced to each other. I am told that she peddles her love in the street because marriage does not provide for a great many people who are hungry for love of one sort or another.

I have seen an assemblage of husbands and wives, and I have heard them call it society; but I could see the fetters they all wore, and

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I missed that social enthusiasm which I shall look for when I quit my little house to live nearer the hearts of people. I have also been in a barrack where there was a sergeant to keep order; I sat on a rough bench to eat bread and beef with the soldiers, and to drink coffee from a tin cup that had rings around its side to mark the half-pints. But the social slush which the men gave one another in camp, was not exactly the thing I wanted. More or less of woman's love, is the confessed or unconfessed want of every man I know of. It does not seem honorable to be a bachelor and prey on society; for children must be taken care of. If the women owned all the real estate, it is barely possible that they might get along, even if all the men should become social vagabonds. However, I have not yet been to that place where the women do own all the property.

If we could have the truth for an orderly sergeant and master of ceremonies, I should be willing to help support the women, and then leave them free to give their love to the most worthy. I have no doubt but there would

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be a more substantial justice then than now, when woman must either sell her love at wholesale to a husband, or at retail to anyone else who can pay for it.

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XXXII.

I HAD been to the city one spring day, and had found very little that was nourishing, though there was no lack of hotels, nor of oranges in the shop-windows; but on my way home I came to the Connecticut. On the further side of it I could see a rocky bank which was blackened with pines and hemlocks and whitened by water-gushes that had frozen on the cliffs. Close to the surface of the river were two wild ducks, flying slowly northward over the open water and fields of ice. The sight of all these was so nourishing, I was led to conclude that I had found the nipple that was meant for me. At other times, when I have visited the thickets where the box-turtles creep with slow haste among skunk-cabbage and white hellebore and crane's-bill and sprouting fern-leaves which look like fiddle-

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heads, nature has opened her arms so widely and given me such full fellowship and satisfaction, that I would feel no need of the love which husbands get from their wives, or of that applause we like to give a horseman, when, putting his hand on the pommel, and his left foot in the stirrup, he vaults lightly into his saddle and goes off on an easy canter.

At such times I hardly know whether it is better to rejoice or to be alarmed at my emancipation. But such moods don't last long: society reässerts itself soon enough. I can see that I am a good deal indebted to the generous-heartedness of the man who owns the old pastures where I walk. He could any day drive away the poet, or dreamer, or man of science from his field, and keep it for his ewes and lambs, and for his bell-wether. I may walk much by myself, but nevertheless I shall find that I am more concerned with the hearts of men than with the state of the roads or the prospects of the weather. My neighbor who disputes nine-tenths of my beliefs, is after all a good deal nearer me than

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are the muskrats which dive into the river and never stop to argue with me.

We build school-houses by the road-side, and colleges on the hill-tops, half expecting that the scholars and men of science are going to do the great work; but I imagine it will be found that the stout-hearted man who believes in something, is the one who does the most work, and keeps all things going. The heart is regnant. I everywhere hear men talking about what they think, and I know they don't think at all; they are only looking at things through their pure or impure hearts. Most of the men I meet have two creeds, according as their hearts are filled with light or darkness. The struggle to have only one creed, is the thing which makes a man's heart like a battle-field.

I meet hundreds of simple men and women who can neither foretell the weather nor make an observation of the sun's altitude at noon; and I inquire how are these people going to steer their ships for this time and the next: yet they go on from year to year without any apparent disaster, and I am

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forced to believe there is a wisdom of the heart which acts by attraction and repulsion, and which is wiser than all the science we take so much pains to get. These people cohere in a mass to some thinker by means of their hearts; the whole body is thus penetrated with thought of some sort, and society is organized with more or less wisdom or unwisdom; for the heart has its own processes. It sees and dogmatizes and carries conviction without aid of syllogism or induction. Wise thinkers are valuable, no doubt, but I don't think we need so many of them as we do of the wise lovers.

I hear a great many confessions that the hearts of men are not just what they should be; but for all that, I discover a tendency in people to do justice to the men who are gifted with tenderness. Cash payment generally prevails, but we are all a little inclined to let the good-hearted fellow pay his way with his heart, just as we let other men pay their way with their money. We take a little less work from some folks because they are kindly; and we go out of our ways to trade

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with a tender-hearted man, notwithstanding he sells us prints which are out of date, or makes us coats which are not quite up to the style. But these good fellows have hard times enough; for they are either preyed upon by selfish people, or else they are petted by their friends until they are too tender to sleep in a bunk right manfully and eat hard-tack in the furtherance of any great cause.

I encounter men who are trying to get along without hearts. They do a feeble business with their five senses and a sort of wit: but they are only good Sodom-apples, full of ashes within, and dry as a chestnut-rail. I could get along with these men if they would not come to my house to persuade me that it is unwise to have beliefs, enthusiasms, and hearts all ablaze. In some places I find asylums for idiots; in Meriden there is a reform-school for boys who are weak in morals; and at New Haven there is a college with a faculty of fifty big heads to instruct the young men who are expecting to do some of the world's thinking by and by; but I

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don't know of any college located hereabouts with a faculty of fifty big hearts to help these men who are troubled with imbecility of the diaphragm.

In these times of rebellion I sometimes suspect a man of carrying concealed weapons, but I never have any doubt about the men who go armed with hard hearts and who give blows as with a slung-shot. The presence of a hard man gives one a succession of raps in the pit of the stomach which are as foul as a blow aimed below the belt. Krusty, who worked for Mr. Hokum last year, had a hard heart, and he seemed to fill the atmosphere with airy fists which threatened to hit you. He has gone away now, and I once more find it pleasant to walk in Mr. Hokum's pastures. But I paid him off by granting him all the favors which he ever asked for. Having, in a few cases, come somewhat near to these hard men, I have judged them to be tender-hearted people who had been hurt by the touch of evil. They were sweet wines that had grown sour. They might perhaps, have been kept sweet,

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if the right word had been spoken at some time, or if the devil had never found a man to speak the first wrong one. Some of them are men who have had a ten years' battle with an unwelcome truth, or who have gone about with a wounded egotism, or with a sense of wrong rankling in their hearts. There is vast hope for a man who upbears the wrongs he has seen or suffered, provided he keeps sweet and does not harden his neighbors and children.

There is no lack of hearts standing idle like dry saw-mills; and I find not a few others which are filled with dead loves, like old houses that have their chambers and garrets cluttered with broken things, and are inhabited by people much concerned with old clothes and linen stored in closets. I know I ought to speak wisely on this matter; for I am confident there is more than one man who has some maniac passion which he keeps chained in one corner of his house, and which shrieks and roars when he would invite his good angels. He can entertain no neighbors for fear they will smell the un-

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wholesomeness and hear the mutterings that are in his home. His best hopes are that the maniac is well chained and that the mad thing will die at last.

I observe that most people are less anxious to find a theory which will account for the universe, than they are to get a little fire to put into their bosoms; and I also notice many people going up and down to do something for their hearts. Very simple men who can not shine in a parlor just now, sometimes tell me that their hearts ache because they don't get such words as brothers and sisters speak to one another. The best I could do for them was to praise God as the lover they stood in need of. I once met a woman driving off to her home in a solitary farm-house. The lines of her face impressed me that she had borne her pain alone and had never told what it was; and I was led to think that husbands and wives are not always good confessors for each other. They are hardly so well off as Edward St. Patrick, who tells me that he goes to the confessional twice a year and cures his heart. Short-sighted men

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who fear evil go to the beer-shops; but I have learned that thirst can only be quenched by that stream of water which should flow from a man's heart. There are some ardent men who go around telling people that social life and many lovers are the things to cure us all. I have doubts of that; for I have been abroad myself, and have stood where I could see men and women who had been ravaged by their lovers.

There are some people who are shy of what they call the herd of men and women, as if it were a shameful thing to let one's heart beat in company with your neighbors, or as if it were possible to call any heart-throb your own. One man is not so very different from all the rest. When I see one farmer planting his potatoes, I generally learn that all the others are doing the same. My experience varies greatly according to the company I am in. When I have lived in societies where I had reason to believe that the hearts of men were filled with mad swirls of passion, I have had one experience. Here in New England where men have often stood

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at the parting of the ways and in the fore-front of the fight with Satan, where they have walked among the abysses and along the cliffs of hell, I have had an experience of another sort.

I once went down to Patchogue, on Long Island, and called at a house to get entertainment; but the powerful black-eyed housewife stood on her door-sill, and, looking at my rough coat and knapsack, overwhelmed me with the suspicions of her heart, saying, "We don't know who to trust." "Is *that* so?" said I. The woman smiled a little, and I concluded that men just now stand in need of some one in whom to trust. If there were but one disinterested man, whom we knew to be such, his existence would be an infinite hope and strength of heart for all men. In view of this need of our hearts, I now think I understand why the powers of darkness are so busy proving that Christ is less than he claimed to be.

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XXXIII.

I HAVE before now said to myself, "I will take my knapsack and follow a straight line into the surrounding spaces; I will conquer the world like the peddler who sells his wares; I will smell the odors of strange households; I will try the cooking of strange women; I will see how each man colors the universal thought with his own thought, and with what eyes he looks at God. Men shall be as strange to me as unnamed plants, and I will not come home this night nor the next, but armed with money I will throw myself on the hospitality of farmers, charcoal-burners, and such men as I may meet at night-fall."

A man who goes abroad in the morning when the farmers are driving their teams afield, and when the mechanics are going shop-ward with their tin pails, may find everything harmonious and profitable, though

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he comes home laden with things which can't be sold to the grocers in State-street. But let him cut loose from his own home as I proposed, and go outside of his circle, and he shall find that society is not grooved for him. The man and woman who live in that out-of-the-way farm-house, surrounded by orchards, cider-mill and barn, did not go there to keep an inn for you; they have crept away from the throngs of people to live on love. He is therefore a brave traveler who shall dare to ask those lovers to quit their love and entertain him for a night.

But an old tramp who has been over the roads, understands well enough that society follows up the lovers and imposes many labors on them besides that of loving. Moreover, I have been in places where I could overhear the confessions which husbands and wives sometimes make, and I have been led to surmise that the love in one of these solitary houses is not nearly enough for the men and women who live there. I am told by those who have tried it, that this getting a little aside from the world to love in pairs, is

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not after all just the thing that they had supposed it would be. And their great despair is, that they don't see what can be done to help the matter; so they go to work for the children, paint their fences, upholster their houses, and do all they can to hide the signs of their failure in the business of love. I do not just now think of any situation more dismal unless it be that of Dainty Selfishness, who failing to get the woman he would have, goes off to his lonely house with the woman he could have, and mopes.

However, if a man does not care to trust himself to the inside of the houses which stand on the roads where smart-grass and May-weed grow, and where the old quince-trees overhang the garden walls, he may walk in the dark until he finds one of the men who keep

WAYSIDE TAVERNS.

I do not propose to say anything about the hotels which charge me for the use of sumptuous carpets and for the services of a prince who has opened his palace to shelter the men

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who can't go home every night. I shall only speak of those roadside houses which are somewhat remote from the town, and which are kept by half-farmer men who have found that if a man shall stay at home and mind his own business the world will come to see him and he shall have a market for his hay and potatoes, and for his doctrine.

I understand that men have always traveled to Tyre and Sidon, but I find that they have not always taken the same roads to get there. I sometimes come to an old thoroughfare where men surged back and forth long before steam took the world's job of transportation. I have great solitude when I travel on one of these old roads; nevertheless, I feel as if I were walking in a throng of men, these ancient highways are so grooved and rutted by the men who have gone before me.

The old taverns on these roads are somewhat memorable. They have a desolation like women who have mutely waited for the man who will never come again. One might shelter himself in one of these old inns for weeks and feel no lack of society, they are so dense

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with the reminders of that rank stream of human life which swept along the roads and made eddies in bar-room and stable. But the landlord has gone off with his bottles to keep a hotel near the railways, and the ostler has gone with his currycomb and brushes to pet horses in other stables.

I once darted into the bar-room of an old tavern to escape the rain. I saw long traces of seed-corn hanging on the hooks which were once occupied by the traveler's hat and overcoat. Barrels of beans and other produce were standing in the space behind the bar, and in the corners of the room. I saw no one in that desolate place; but I heard a noise in the adjoining rooms, which made me know that I was looked after by that hospitality which is one-half a desire to serve and one-half a suspicion that I may not be able to pay for what I get.

The small country store-keepers stop at the old inns on their way back from town with a load of boxes, barrels, bags of coffee, and bunches of corn-brooms stuck into safe places about the load. The farmers go there, and

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they ruck up the flaps of their long blue frocks when they want to get at their wallets to pay their reckoning. When I have stopped to drink beer at an old tavern I would seem to have a taste of all the drams which had been drunk there for fifty years, and I would feel as if I had joined the revelers and indorsed their excesses, the associations of the place were so mingled with my draught.

My tavern was an inn as long ago as when my grandfather went there in the times when men wore knee-breeches and stockings with clocks at the ankles, and its rooms smell as if much foul speech and many stale jokes had stuck in its walls. My landlord, who holds himself aloof, assures me that water ought to be weak enough for a man who don't want strong drink. A feeble-minded old man who eats at the second table and builds fires, does the hospitality of the establishment by making speech with me; I suppose he takes his pay in the odds and ends of social heat which he gets from comers and goers. Ancient oaks stand about my inn; and there is an elm the trunk of which I can't measure with my arms

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thrice outstretched. These trees give some majesty to the rotting house and stables, and I conclude that men have been proud to say that they had dined at the Great Elm. The grass is no longer worn away by the teams and by the stage which stopped at the door while the passengers refreshed themselves at the bar, and while the driver and ostler mingled their words,—the one covered with the dust of the road, and the other perfumed with the ammonia of the stables.

The dense earthiness of the landlord provokes reflection. He is a perpetual utterance that eating is a good act, and that it is well to be a hearty animal. He is no reformer; the world is well enough as it is, and he will take it as he found it. Why should he have spirituality and mentality to rebuke me when I am eager and hungry. He has met none but hungry and weary men for years, and who shall dare to blame him if he does look upon men as animals which, having fine tastes, require to be stabled in the house, with fine linen between their bodies and the straw. Deacon Collins some years ago bought a farm

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with a tavern on it. Being a gloomy man he found it hard work to keep a roadside inn. So he cut off the top of his sign-post and used the bottom as a hitching-place for his own horse. After that he found it easy to devote himself to reform and to the gospel of universal smash according to Miller.

Notwithstanding these old taverns have an inner sphere in which the women live, and notwithstanding the men in these places sit at table with the women and eat woman's cookery, using knives and forks instead of their fingers, the society of the bar-room is, I find, not unlike that in camps and all other places where men live much by themselves. It is a rude animal life in the houses which are kept open for me when I get outside of my circle.

There is so much of this society while I have so little need of it, I have sometimes been led to pick flaws in the management of the universe. But I am learning to look at things a little more closely, as with one eye shut, and I have concluded that God has not limited his likes and dislikes by my constitution. I imagine he has very tolerant feelings

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toward good, strong animal life which makes easy work of eating and breeding. Were it not so I think it would go hard with the skunks and woodchucks. For all that I imagine God likes some things better than others. I have staid at home and wrought in my garden, stopping once in a while to note the manner in which rebellions are quenched, for it is a part of my business to see how the work of this world is to be done and who is to do it, and I have observed that God has picked the cheapest men he could to die for the country, and that he has saved the best he could to live for it.

A wayside tavern is a cheap place for a man who does not want to talk. None but a very rich man can pay his way with his speech. Paying one's way with his ideas is not much practiced, except in the higher circles of life. Our thought is so sectional but very little of it will pass outside of our own states; it is not yet nationalized. Besides, the demand for bread-stuffs and meat is so overbearing, you shall go far before you find a man who will prefer your thought to his meat

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and potatoes. Most men are too poor to pay their bills in this way, and therefore we beg to be let alone and to be suffered to go to an inn where the landlord is satisfied with our money.

The man who took me for a peddler and cursed me, is not the only one who has given me an impression of God. You may wait on the outskirts of a crowd and watch for the image of God which is reflected from the minds of each man, and if tolerant enough you shall find it more pleasant than looking at the bits of colored light, green, yellow and red, which are cast back by the drops of rain frozen on the trees; you shall find it grander than gazing at the large red moon when it comes up from the sea and makes a bridge of light across the dark waters of the bay.

But all these second-hand views of God are just a little distorted, I imagine, like the image of things seen in turbid or troubled waters. Men talk of God in my hearing, but I notice that they are looking at him

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through some ideal, or earthiness, some aspiration or limitation of their own, and when I have heard a man's idea of God I have imagined Him to be like the man who was talking. When I walk with the geologist I perceive that God is a wonderful stone-breaker, and when I go afield with the botanists, I perceive that He is a master-florist. I am amazed at the work He has done to get the forest well clothed with leaves, the grass well sprouted, and all the buds for next year set in their right places; I must not therefore conclude that God is too busy to look after me,—I must feel more sure that I shall be well cared for.

This man speaks and I perceive that God is a great builder, that He has infinite patience and is master of the situation. The other man is looking for a God who can disregard the multiplication-table at any point in His calculations. Thus I don't wonder that men sometimes appear a little atheistical to one another, and that they are intolerant toward one another's gods. I once heard a man speaking of God's management as if He

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were a great experimenter, a being full of expedients and make-shifts, and who had to work hard to beat the devil and make both ends meet. Intolerance welled up in my heart and I wanted to say, "I don't believe God is any such tinker as that; I believe He is full of resources and knows how to do a good job." I am now looking for the man who has cleansed his eyes and who can show me a great deal more of God than he does of himself.

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XXXIV.

I WAS arrested once in a western town. I should perhaps say detained, for the officer of the law did not come to me with a formal essay written by a justice of the peace. The thing happened in this wise; I had sold goods in that place, and was waiting for means to leave. I felt serene, for I had in the way of barter become the owner of a shop-worn copy of "Irving's Life of Goldsmith." The latter person, it appears, was at one time something of a vagabond-walker; but he afterward wrote his name in big letters for the world to look at, though he never really got the knack of paying his debts. With all his genius, I imagine he could never have been taught to manage a farm like Mr. Hokum. While waiting there I felt a slight touch between my shoulders, as with the end of a finger. On looking up I saw a man in

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butternut-colored clothes; he was smoking placidly, almost dreamily, and he said that he had a small account against me for having sold goods in his city without a license. The man's act was graceful, for it was power acting freely, and it did not take me long to see that I was arrested by the town, and by the county, state and Union, if the matter should go as far as that.

I have been arrested a great many times since I began doing business in the meadows and pastures, but I do not always learn at once for what I am detained. Mother Saint Martin's meadow stopped me more than a year ago with a touch more gentle than that of the politest marshal. Since then I have hung around that field to find what it wanted of me; I have crossed it on my way to other places; I have gone to it on purpose. I knew that Mother Saint Martin wore a man's coat and hat, that she quenched her thirst with things stronger than tea, and that she had her work done by vagabond men: nevertheless, she has always made me feel as if she were regnant in her sphere; she has

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given me such piercing looks when I have passed her house, and looked into her yard. I also knew that the Saint Martins had given the country one bishop whose name has found a place in the Cyclopedia, and who some years ago slid down from episcopacy into papacy.

I think I notice some tendency for people to fall back into primitive forms of religion, just as my seedling grapes show a disposition to be like the wild ones along the Quinnipiac. I often get a taste of paganism in my books, and I have myself been near enough to it to feel its heat and light, and to understand how people might undertake to live and die by some form of paganism and perhaps feel intolerant toward those who chose to live and die by other creeds.

I had seen a man lying dead on the floor of Mother Saint Martin's barn where he had died in the night. Strange men were standing around to perform the last formalities of the law, and a man of the vagabond class was hovering over the dead body with that jealous watchfulness which outcast men feel in the

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presence of those who own the houses and land. The thought of all these things may have put a charm on my eyes, but nevertheless, it was not the glamour of the old lady's home that had thus detained me in her meadow.

I have walked in many a meadow, but Mother Saint Martin's has had the most to do with me; I will, therefore, speak of it with some degree of minuteness.

This meadow lies at the foot of a wooded slope; from it I look in one direction across rye-fields and dry fields, and other meadows till I see Mt. Beseck. In another direction I see spire and tower, flag-staff and cupola, clustered together and lifted above the trees. It is watered by a small brook which creeps out from beneath low hanging trees, as from behind a curtain put there to hide the mouth of the ravine which has been worn into the sandstone, and which in these days holds a gloom flecked with sunshine. Mr. Hokum shares this brook with the old lady, and in the spring-time he makes a dam with sticks and dead leaves to direct his half of the

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water into the gutters which irrigate his meadow. Much skunk-cabbage grows there in the spring; later there are painted-cups and iris; and now there are lilies and meadow rue, buttercups and clover-heads, and tall ferns mixed with wild grasses. In one place there is a patch of herds-grass swayed over by its own weight; in another there is a thicket composed of an ash tree, a sumac, an elm, a dogwood bush, a bitter-sweet and a grape-vine. Sweet cicely grows in the corners of the fence; it has a gentle domesticity like a man who remains fragrant and loving though he walk in solitude, and it has no need of going to the gardens to get refinement. Ancient apple-trees, with trunks overgrown with poison-ivy, stand everywhere, and there are young ones which have sprung up from the seeds left in the ordure of the cattle that eat the rowen and browse the trees. Mother Saint Martin comes hither in the spring to get pot-herbs. Rude men who keep their inspiration in bottles make the hay, and in the fall they come to get the apples for cider. I know that this old meadow has

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little to distinguish it from any other meadow, unless it be the fences which surround it; and I also know that it yields more weeds and less grass than the adjoining lot which Mr. Hokum has bought from some one of the Saint Martins. Yet like some people who can say much because they have done little, this meadow finally opened its mind to me one day last spring when the turf was sprouting and when the apple-trees were in bloom, and I will report what it said about

GRASS.

"All flesh is grass," says an ancient Hebrew, and I accept his dogma, though I have no reason to believe that he was looking at the meadows with the eye of a botanist, or that he knew the value of the great family of grasses. If a man will take pains to look at things just as they are, he will find that grass is king in most places. Western wheat, the Scotchman's oats, and the rye on which shrewd Connecticut men feed; the rice of India, and the wild rice of Minnesota; the barley which temperance men raise and sell to the

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brewers; Cuban sugar-cane and corn, and the bamboo of China; all these are grasses, and brothers to Mr. Hokum's red-top and timothy, and the bog-grass which stands on a tussuck. There are not many places in which this family is not at work, either with head or body. Indeed, grass lies at the very bottom of all the affairs of men; and we may look for much confusion if Grass should ever shirk from his job of governing the world.

To me bread and butter, beef and wool, are nothing but forms of grass. He who uses these should know that he, too, is a consumer of grass. Men who reflect but very little often seem to have such glimpses of the truth about grass, as we always get when we stand too near a thing; and they talk of their bread and butter as if these were the symbols and sum totals of all business. A man shall not build houses, buy pictures, and read poems, until he has more grass than he can use, and until he is able to feed the architect and the painter and the poet. Whoever can help King Grass, may therefore hope to hasten the millennium.

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An old meadow that keeps apple-trees, may stand for the central bureau and office of nature, the court of the world; for grass is king, and the wild-rose is queen, since the apple and pear, peach and plum, raspberry, blackberry, strawberry and quince, too, all belong to her family. The farmer is the most loyal of men; for he resolutely digs up burdock and daisy to make room for his grass. When cotton undertook to be king, the loyal grass-growers mowed away the rebellion with one-tined forks, like a stout man on a hay-mow. But I shall be as loyal as the farmers, and more gallant, too: for I will serve Queen Rose one half the time.

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XXXV.

ALTHOUGH nature has wooed me in forest and meadow, I have not become her devout worshiper, for I know her to be as stern a dame as any man ever had for a mother. She would freeze me as quickly as she would a beggar, and she would freeze a beggar as quickly as she would a carrot. I have praised her with my speech, but for all that she will never hesitate to use my tongue to feed her grasses. She puts a little wit into our heads, and then tells us to go where we please, but be sure to keep out of the way when she is at work. I must not swim in the sea when the mad waves are fretting and booming against the rocks on Webb's island; I can not play with the river when it leaps over the ledges; and I dare not be near the lightning when it rips a long splinter from a hemlock tree. In view of this

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harshness of nature I once fell into a profound melancholy, and all gospels seemed inadequate. Had I not learned how to love my limitations, I might have become a cynic and snarled at hail and frost.

I have never yet talked with a man who has not had his clinch with the universe; and my wonder is that our cynicism is so mild. The men of the world tell me they don't believe that any man can be happy; but I find they are all waiting for me to applaud them for having made so great a discovery. The men of the church say that we are all sinners; nevertheless I have learned that the church is too narrow for any man who claims to have a pure conscience. The best men that I know see more evil than I do, but hope keeps them sweet, and they watch the thought of the world for the signs of the good time coming.

When I walk in the winter time, I find nature somewhat against me, but I have dropped my quarrel with her; therefore I have hope, and always keep an eye out for

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THE SIGNS OF SPRING.

Sugar-makers wading in the snow,
Scattering their buckets as they go.

Sap of maple glinting on the spout,
Smoke of camp-fire, and the wood-man's shout.

Melted snows upon the tarns;
Eggs and cacklings in the barns;

Cawing crows among the oaks;
Marshes muttering twilight croaks;

Day-god mounting high and higher,
Giving light more mixed with fire.

Hand-grips mystic and masonic;
Love that's growing less Platonic.

Sunny banks all brown with leaves;
Farmers chopping in their sleeves;

Life has come, and hellebore;
Faith is up — despair is o'er.

Being in a mood somewhat earnest; I once felt an impulse to stop a man in the road and ask him if he had brought any news from God. But seeing the humor of my

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situation, I took care to strangle the question that was rising to my mouth.

I now think it would not be well for a sane man to go into the street to ask such questions, unless, perchance, he dares to be laughed at, or unless he wants to see men shrink away from him as from a satirical humorist who has no sympathy for their hunger and darkness. Let him wait till spring, instead, and then ask the budding year if it brings any good news from God.

The coming of spring is of vast moment in the agricultural districts, and to the northern lumbermen and fishermen who are waiting for the streams to break up. Its chief value with me, however, lies in the fact that it brings the report, or rather confirms the old report, that God is well, and that the universe is just as sound as ever. The sun whirling upward toward its summer place, the fields and streams cleared promptly for action, the grass sprouting up with all its ancient power and freshness, all these show an unabated vigor — show that God is not getting feeble. Indeed, there are signs that

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things in general are gaining somewhat in health. There are new houses building on the sites of the old ones; the towns are spreading a little; and in some places there is more clover than before; and, methinks, there is more hope and power in the hearts of those who are trusting Christ to link them to a God who never fails, and to a universe that is in no danger of bankruptcy.

God is well: therefore the universe is sound at the core. Here is a fact, if well looked at, that shall heal your maladies. Hang it up in your memory where it will keep green like a sprig of live-forever that is stuck in the crack of a ceiling.

Iterate, reïterate,
Snatch it from the hells;
Circulate and meditate
That God is well.

Get the singers to sing it,
Put it in the mouths of bells,
Pay the ringers to ring it,
That God is well.

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XXXVI.

I AM amazed when I stop to observe the amount of fellowship which exists between men and brutes. On one occasion I asked a boy of the lower class which he loved best, brother James or brother dog. He said he loved his brother James best; but for all that his dog fellowship was uppermost. I stepped aside once to let a man and woman dash past me. They and the carriage appeared as if penetrated with the fiery spirit of the coal-black horse, and I thought I should not like to marry a horse-woman for fear my boy might have an arched neck and a mane instead of a beard. When I have looked into some of the dark corners of human experience, I have found brute life holding people with a power almost equal to anything I had ever expected from mankind or womankind. This love between man and

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beast has already claimed a place in our books. There is a literary woman just outside of my walking-place, who lets her desolate heroine find comfort in the love of a cow; and I read that horse-talk is common language for all such gentlemen as the world has been able to show.

I had supposed that the brute was the lowest form of life which could impress me, but my later walks have led me to conclude that the wild plants have a life in them which yearns for me with a mute strength that goes beyond the deepest-hearted woman who ever loved in silence. I was impelled once to put my hand on the trunk of a tree in some such manner as one puts his palm on the shoulder of a man he knows. When I have for a time left everything behind me, and walked alone on the more solitary parts of Wallingford plain in order to look at the toad-flax, hop-clover and shrub-oaks, I have felt the life of the plants, and I have found that they had something to give in return for my attention. I know that the nature which I go to see is a sort of humanized nature, for there is not a

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rood of land in Wallingford that has not some hint of man. It is like an Indian who has washed the green paint from his face, and who has bought his clothes at the tailor's, but who nevertheless hunts and loafs and gives a wild whoop. Tame as it may be, the spirit which dwells in a meadow is that of nature, and its properties become more real when I contrast it with the subtle element I enter as soon as I leave the fields and walk into a town to see the

OLD SHADE TREES.

I don't have to go into a thicket every time I wish to get a taste of nature; I can often find it around the habitations of men. I find men who are doing their work as simply and unconsciously as a beaver at his dam, and who never stop to look over their shoulders to see about your applause or mine. It may be that we are in the habit of making a distinction between men and nature somewhat too hastily. Therefore I shall not speak of the trees which have been planted by men who have just awaked to a consciousness of

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art, who fill their gardens with a strange jumble of trees and shrubs, and then hope they have done something artistic and natural; neither will I speak of those which have been planted by men whose lives had become artistic, and who know how to deck their homes with a little of that sweet confusion which reigns in some old pasture. I shall only speak of those trees which have been cared for by simple men who planted chiefly for shade, and thought as little of effect as the woodchuck which digs its hole between a choke-cherry and a shrub-oak. I have in mind great lichen-stained elms which stand in the road, and which lay hold of the ground with half-naked roots that hint at power more decidedly than a lion-footed chair-of-state. I have in mind the four maples set in a row between the house and road, which chafe the cornices and rub the moss away from spots on the shingles. I have also in mind those trees which give me glimpses of old gables and broken chimney-tops, and those which stand near the well in a back yard, where tired men and boys wash themselves in a skillet on a bench.

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It matters little whether these simple men have planted wisely or not, for time and nature are charitable; they often find a way to complete the work of unskillful men. When I have come out on some new road, I have sometimes been arrested by the dignity which was given to the farm-houses by the oaks and elms which stretch their arms over my path, and I would again imagine that I had come to a people who expressed themselves through the arts, and who were bred to take command in our great emergencies. I would think that my speech ought to be furbished, like the words in a book. But I found that those men and women had muscles well seasoned with work, and that their hands and arms were not like those of an artist. I afterwards concluded that literature is always open to such people, for the mind keeps limber somewhat longer than the body, and a man may hope to write prose and verse, though he clothes them in crabbed letters.

Considering that our Puritan ancestors came from among English oaks, I sometimes ask why they did not plant more of our

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native oaks about their old homesteads. But I can only answer the question by applauding them for a resolute purpose to leave old things behind, and to be contented with what was newest, most native and near at hand. It may be that the latent Yankee which existed in the Puritan, at once seized upon the stately and graceful elm as something more like himself than are the sturdy white oaks. However, I suppose the Puritans' science was too weak to deal with our oaks; therefore they let them alone just as we do some people who work best when left to themselves, and they made use of the more pliant elms and maples. Consequently it often happens that a man's pasture has more dignity than his home.

I concern myself with the origin and history of some of the trees I find. I have put loud questions into the ears of an old man, and I have learned how small his great elm had once been. I have seen a farmer coming in from the thickets with a young tree on his back. Having had a smell of the woods, he had stolen back with ax and spade to get a

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morsel to put into some corner about his dwelling. One day last spring, I came to a house where a young tree had been planted; I said, "It is good to know how these old elms made a beginning."

The house is small, and stands where three roads meet; on one side is the garden, with flowers and grape-trellises; the back yard has a row of bee-hives and a wood-pile; the barns are on another side, and they speak of a thorough farmer. The man must have felt that his place lacked dignity, and so planted an elm on the three-cornered plat made by the meeting of the roads. It is a sturdy young tree which three men could scarcely bring from the woods. The man has planted truthfully, for he cut off the top just at the base of the lowest branches, and he brought long rye straw from the barn to put about the roots; an old-time man would have planted a few potatoes with his tree to draw the moisture. The tree has made many dark leaves, and promises to preside over house and barn, and overlook rye-fields and corn-fields.

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I have myself helped at the setting of elms, and I have learned something about the men who planted our oldest trees. The man who planted the poplars, was in a hurry for something to grow; he did not stop long to live in the shadow he had made, but went elsewhere to plant again. The maples were planted by a man who liked their feminine dignity and freshness and who always acted as if he thought the second best was good enough. He who planted the mazzard cherry-tree for shade was a very practical man, who looked well to the use of a thing; but to him usefulness meant just about the same as good to eat. He was too practical, and his boys would never have come to much had they not taken some love of beauty from their mother. Beauty is one of the working forces, I understand: it gives a spring to genius, and adds politeness to our morals. The man who set out pine trees did a very small business in that line, but he was a cheerful fellow and could sing dirges to his children for a lullaby, and not be melancholy.

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XXXVII.

I THINK I know the value of society as well as any man does, and therefore I have no objection to looking at things with such eyes as my neighbor and I can agree on, for he has as much interest in clear-seeing as I. But there are times when it is good for a man to walk alone; nature has her privacies, and won't reveal them to you nor to me when others are listening. It is for this reason that a man should divest himself of every rag which society has put on him, and bask in the presence of nature, like boys lounging naked on the warm river-beaches to hunt for the eggs which the turtles have hidden in the sand. I have been as eager to seek the crowd of men and women as any man could be after his own work was done, and I have not always been slow to look at things through other men's eye-holes.

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The gathering-places of men have attracted me like magnets. The sight of a village spire and strange chimneys allures me with a promise of heat which does not come from stoves, and of light which does not come from lamps. Thus inspired I can walk in many directions. I have visited college towns on Commencement day where I could see the young thinkers cutting their milk-teeth on certain tough old names, like Cato, Zeno, Aristophanes and Pindar, themes which are mostly kept in those towns, and which serve for generation after generation, they have such durability in spite of frequent use. In other places India-rubber rings are used by the little folk who are preparing to chew everything which comes to them. Agrimony seems to me a fresher theme just now than any of those old names; I fancy that trochee after trochee may yet come and cluster about that word until a poem is made. Of all the young men who stand up in dress-coats and white vests to address me when I go to a college town, he who has studied best has the honor of delivering the valedictory. But

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the roses are thrown at him who has made the most friends among the women in the gallery.

I know there are men of culture outside of my circle who have walked more than I, but I don't know of any one within it. I have therefore, dear reader, appointed myself to speak some last words at

THE FORK IN OUR ROAD.

A man should not be always walking and looking; his eyes and legs are not the whole of him. My people have long had the habit of stopping when their work was done, and I find that it is good to sit down and shut one's eyes in order to watch for the things that are near at home. If a man can not do this for days and years, nothing shall go well with him. I am made weary when I go among men, I meet so many of them who are always walking toward shop or field, or who are always so earnestly, almost madly, at work, as if under some crushing necessity that will never let them stop. I hear men glorying over our railways and telegraphs,

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our sewing-machines and mowing-machines, and in our great patent office which is intended to protect the men who invent machines to save work. I know we all eat more and drink more, wear more and tear more, in consequence of these great inventions, but I am constrained to ask, When is the world going to learn how to use more leisure? Many of us have walked so far now that we wear our leisure as awkwardly as Edward St. Patrick does his best coat and hat. If a man does not walk to enter into rest, he had better stay at home.

I have not spoken to you in the language of the shop or farm, neither have I used such words as I speak in my garden. I have been speaking from my privacy to you in your privacy. If a man wants me to listen, let him address his most private thought to what is innermost in me. Hand shaking and talk about the weather may do for people who live far apart, and who can get no nearer by never so much walking. I may be charged with walking in every direction. But I can only say that I often travel both ways on the

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